Chronicles

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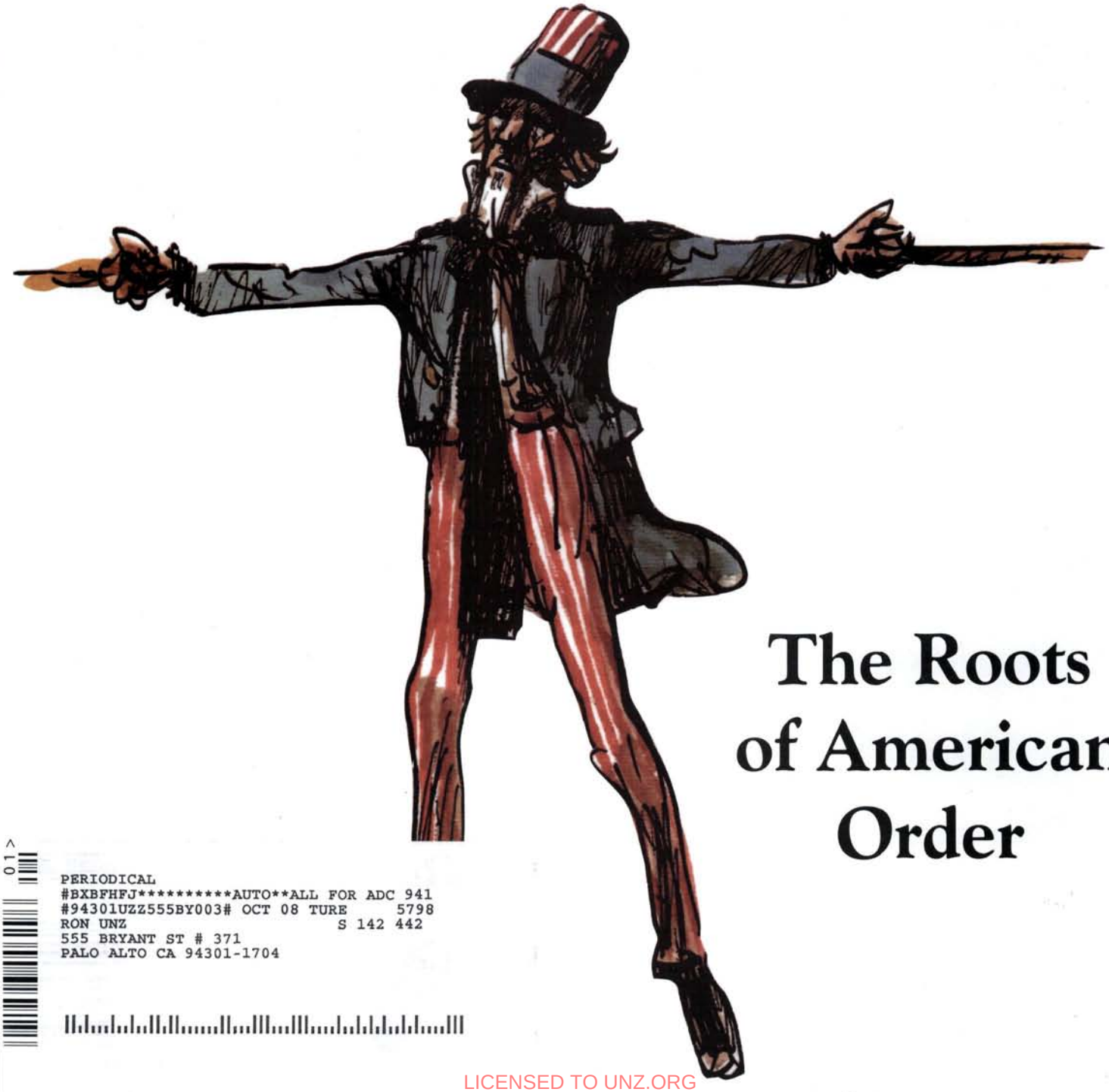
THE PROMISE OF AMERICAN LIFE



The Roots of American Order

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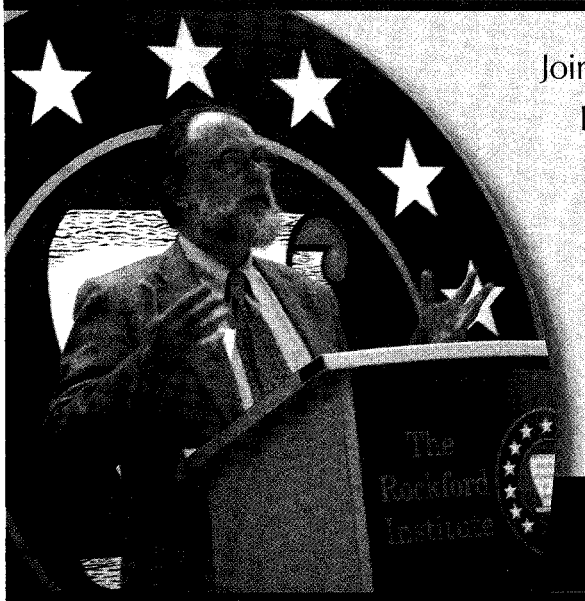

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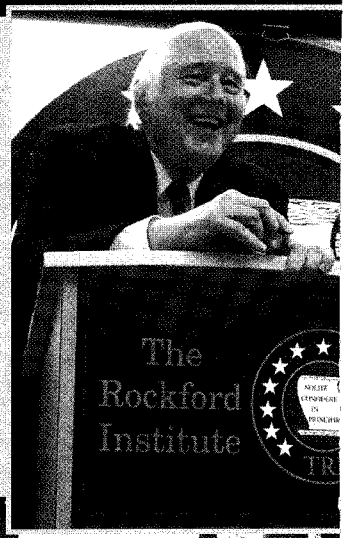
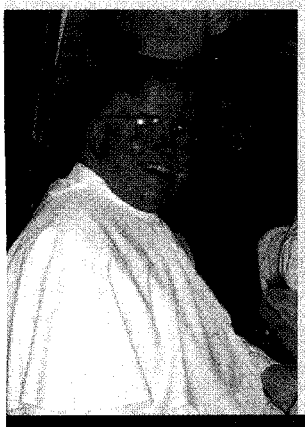
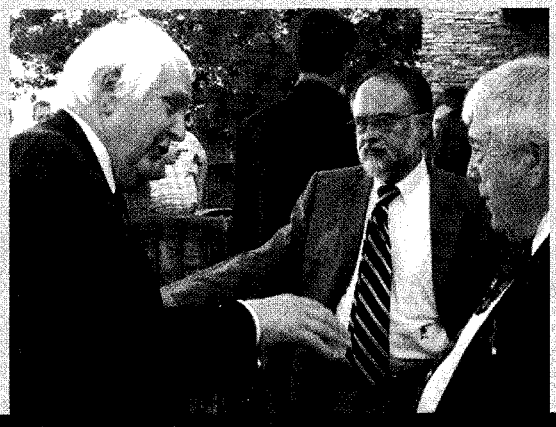
"The Stuarts and the English Revolution: From 'Charles the Martyr' to William the Dutchman



Anglo-American political traditions, both liberal and conservative, were forged in the revolutionary struggles of the 17th century. Understanding American history, including our own Revolution and Civil War, is impossible without an understanding of the influential political thinkers this age produced: Hobbes, Filmer, and Locke. And for all the strife and horror of the times, English letters flowered in the works of such men as Defoe, Dryden, Marvell, and Milton. The works of Jeremy Taylor and others made this the last period when English was an important language of theology, but the age also saw the rise of the most lunatic sectarians: Levellers, Diggers, Ranters, and Fifth Monarchists—nutballs who make Pat Robertson seem as wise as Newman.





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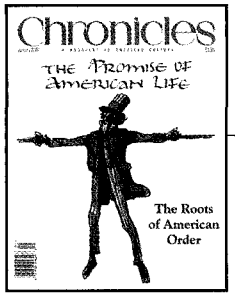

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On Excluding Muslims

Srdja Trifkovic's call to exclude "Mecca from America" ("To Lose a War," *American Interest*, November) brings to mind Protestant-nativist attempts to "exclude Rome from America" a century ago. Dr. Trifkovic's reasons for excluding Islam from American society can be applied to the case of pre-Vatican II Catholicism in the United States. Anti-Catholic literature often expressed the fear that American Catholics would be more loyal to Rome than to their own country. The traditional Catholic support of a Catholic state and disavowal of democracy and the separation of Church and state bears much similarity to Islam's fusing of "mosque and state."

As sociologist José Casanova has noted, the perceived threat to Protestant culture caused by the number of Catholic immigrants arriving in the United States (much larger than the current influx of Muslims) was enough to instigate a few riots, a "know-nothing" movement, and the failure of Catholic Al Smith's campaign. It wasn't until Vatican II, with its support for religious freedom, and the candidacy of John F. Kennedy, who vowed not to take his cues from Rome, that the Catholic stigma began to dissolve. By the 1980's, the situation had changed enough for Samuel Huntington to call the "third wave" of democratization in Latin America and parts of Asia a Catholic trend.

Dr. Trifkovic's own Eastern Orthodox culture was viewed as essentially anti-Western in Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*. Dr. Trifkovic has a similar essentialist view of Islam that doesn't leave much room for developments and changes within the religion. It is not clear even today that many American Muslims' acceptance of *sharia* necessarily translates into opposition to democracy and the distinction between sacred and secular.

But even if we grant that antidemocratic teachings have wide support today, the decentralized nature of Islam suggests that this can change. There are new models (in Indonesia, for example), movements, and groups that suggest Islam and democracy need not be opposed. The situation in Europe and the Middle East should not be viewed as the only models, particularly viewed from the vantage point of the United States and her history of assimilating and domesticating foreign and even threatening religions.

—*R.P. Cimino*
North Bellmore, NY

Dr. Trifkovic Replies:

Christians who belong to different traditions live harmoniously together not only in America but in Germany, Bohemia, and the Low Countries—the bloody religious battlefields of 350 years ago. By contrast, Muslims do not live harmoniously with Christians—or with any other non-Muslim group—anywhere in the world, and have never been able to do so, for reasons inherent in their ideology. Violent intolerance against us "infidels" is mandated by their holy book, exemplified by their "prophet," and firmly rooted in 13 centuries of recorded history.

Until a leading Muslim figure takes his cue from JFK and assures non-Muslims that he unreservedly rejects *sharia*, *jihad*, and discrimination in every shape and form—Sura 9:5 included—and until his position is supported by the majority of the Muslim world, the "stigma" will be every bit as justified as that against Bolshevism or National Socialism.

My "essentialist view of Islam" is supported by experience. Attempts to reformulate the doctrine of *jihad* in particular are not new, but they have failed because they oppose centuries of orthodoxy. As Clement Huart pointed out back in 1907, "Until the newer conceptions, as to what the Koran teaches as to the duty of the believer towards non-believers, . . . have more generally leavened the mass of Moslem belief and opinion, it is the older and orthodox standpoint on this question which must be regarded by non-Moslems as representing Mohammedan teaching and as guiding Mohammedan action."

A century later, the willingness of a few to become what are objectively bad Muslims may be laudable in human terms, but it will do nothing to change the score. A reformed faith that would question the divine authority on which the institutions of Islam rest, or attempt by rationalistic selection or abatement to effect a change, would be Islam no longer.

Islam, in its eminently orthodox codification, threatens us and discriminates against us. We must do everything to keep the threat away from our shores.

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by Leon Hadar

Can Baker Clean Up the Mess in Iraq?

If a man (person?) from Mars were to have landed in Washington in late November, he (or she?) would have had no choice but to conclude that the important decisions in the capital of the World's Only Remaining Superpower are made by two mighty dudes. Note to Mars: The real Masters of the Universe are Baker and Hamilton, as in the Baker-Hamilton Commission.

After all, our Martian was probably spending hours watching officials, lawmakers, and pundits on news shows who kept insisting that, when it comes to determining the future of U.S. policy in Iraq and the Broader Middle East, well, forget our Commander in Chief or those lawmakers that some Earthlings elected on November 7 to represent them in Congress. Instead, former Secretary of State James Baker (Republican) and former U.S. Rep. Lee Hamilton of Indiana (Democrat), the cochairmen of the Iraq Study Group (ISG)—a.k.a. the Baker Commission (when Republicans controlled both the White House and Congress) or the Baker-Hamilton Commission (now that the Democrats have taken over Capitol Hill)—were the ones chosen to draw the outlines of a U.S. Mideast strategy that could affect our global role for the rest of this century.

Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that, after American voters had made it clear in November that they wanted to change the course in Iraq, Washington was holding its breath as it waited for Baker, Hamilton, and the other esteemed members of their panel to recommend exactly what that new course should be. Hence, after all was said and done, including the midterm election, a group of nine unelected, aging men and one woman ("fresh eyes"), including worn-out foreign-policy-establishment types (Lawrence Eagleburger and William Perry), crooked lobbyists (Leon Panetta and Vernon Jordan), and failed politicians (Charles Robb and Alan Simpson), was going to decide whether American men and women would continue to die for an unjust cause in faraway Mesopotamia.

Baker had warned that his group should not be expected to produce a "magic bullet" to resolve the war in Iraq. But that didn't stop our talking heads from spending hours on television forecasting the ISG's recommendations, including the beginning of a phased withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq to "off-shore" military bases; a confederation of three autonomous regions; opening direct talks with Iran and Syria; and restarting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

In any case, the conventional wisdom is that, by the time you read this, the team of Wise Persons will have come up with a policy that would be characterized as "staying the course"; far from "cutting and running," the policy will supposedly advance a "realistic" approach to protecting core U.S. global interests. At the same time, the bipartisan makeup of the panel of Elder Statespersons could also provide political cover for both President George W. Bush and the new Democratic Congress to make the "hard" and costly choices in Iraq and the Middle East.

The problem with this kind of analysis is that it assumes that, equipped with superior intelligence and political cunning, a bunch of smart guys and gals can indeed produce a cost-effective *American* strategy for Iraq. If you build a commission, the policies will come. But the verdict of the American voters in November was based on their conclusion that the United States had, for all practical purposes, lost the war in Iraq and that she didn't have either the military power or the political will to force any American strategy on that country, whether that would involve either partitioning Iraq into three mini-states or selecting a user-friendly Saddam-like strongman to rule from Baghdad.

Moreover, when we consider using American power to implement some of the ideas that were discussed by the ISG, it's important to remember that the meaning of *power* in this case goes beyond fundamental U.S. military and economic capabilities. Does any realistic observer of American domestic politics expect either the Republican occupant of the White House or the Democratic lawmakers on Capitol Hill to agree to exert diplomatic pressure on Israel and force her to make painful concessions to the Palestinians and the Syrians—and to do so two years before the 2008 presidential and congressional elections? You don't have to be a Middle East expert to figure out that any effort to bring stability to the Middle East should include an American effort to bring peace to the Holy Land. Nor do you have to be a veteran political observer to conclude that, in the real Washington, that's not going to happen—even under the political cover of Baker and Hamilton.

In a way, from any perspective from which you view the strategic correlation of forces in the Middle East, the United States is now constrained in her ability to produce policy outcomes in Iraq and much of the region. In fact, the neocon-driven policies of the Bush administration have weakened the pro-American regimes there while strengthening the hands of Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and Hamas. Not only did these policies open the Pandora's box of ethnic and religious blood feuds in Iraq, but, thanks to the neocons and their Decider, radical Shiite and Sunni forces are now on the rise in the Middle East, threatening to destabilize whatever is left of Lebanon and the Israeli-Palestinian "peace process." To put it differently, the Americans have neither the power nor the will to clean up the mess they have made in Iraq and the Middle East, and there are growing doubts about Washington's ability to defend its remaining allies in the region. The American Moment in the Middle East, beginning in 1991 with the Gulf War, was brought to a swift end in the aftermath of the Iraq war, following the end of major combat operations in 2003.

What is left for the ISG and the rest of Washington is to propose a set of mechanisms that could become part of a process in which the United States, together with other global and regional players, could start cleaning up the mess and creating the conditions for defusing and perhaps even resolving the crises in Palestine/Israel and Lebanon. That process could include the convening of an international conference, chaired by the United States, the European Union, Russia, China, India, and Japan, to which all the governments in the Middle East, including Iran, Syria, and the Palestinian Authority would be invited to participate.

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The United States, of course, would concede that she cannot remain the "boss" in the Middle East. Can any member of the Reality-Based Community challenge that conclusion? Washington can still maintain enormous power to affect policy outcomes, but it cannot determine them on its own. Hence, the downside is that, from now on, Washington will need to take into consideration the interests that Iran has in Iraq—but it will also benefit from Iran using her power to tame her Shiite allies in Iraq. Settling the conflict in the Holy Land will require more concessions from Israel—but it will also make it more likely that Saudi Arabia and other Arab states, as well as the European Union, will be willing to get involved through diplomatic, military, and economic assistance. Syrian (and Iranian) pressure on Hezbollah could certainly help resolve the crisis in Lebanon.

It's quite possible that such a process will be long and exhausting, and, in the end, it might not bring about successful and stable outcomes. Bush and the neocons may have ignited a geopolitical storm that could take years, perhaps even decades, to calm. But as the United States becomes one of several powers competing for influence in the Middle East, the costs involved in dealing with the aftermath of the storm cease to be a an exclusively American problem. And that is an outcome that most Americans can live with. ©

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

CHICKENHAWKS ROOSTING

Two facts about George W. Bush now seem incontestable: He has been the neoconservative chief executive *par excellence*, and he has become a failed president. Bush has led the nation to war in Iraq, branded Iran and North Korea as members of the "Axis of Evil," and declared in his Second Inaugural Address that America's security depends on fighting "tyranny" and spreading "democracy" throughout the whole world. In the Middle East, he has often deferred to Israel and steadfastly refused to deal with Palestinian leaders of whom the Israelis disapprove. He is firmly committed to free trade and sees the United States as the "first universal nation," as shown by his unwavering support for a guest-worker/amnesty bill that would bring 60 million new immigrants to the United States over the next decade. He has presided over a vast expansion of the size and scope of the federal government. All of these policies are firmly rooted in neoconservative doctrine, and there were no more zealous advocates for the invasion of Iraq than the neocons.

As was predicted in these pages, Bush's embrace of neoconservatism has proved disastrous for his presidency and the country. Iraq has descended into violent anarchy; North Korea and Iran appear committed to developing nuclear weapons; and America's prestige has plummeted in the Middle East and throughout the world. And voters disenchanted with Iraq, a stagnating industrial economy, and President Bush's support for mass immigration and big government handed the House and the Senate over to the Democrats. Bush has steered his presidency and his party right into an iceberg, and the water is rising fast.

But some of the passengers have already pushed their way onto the lifeboats. Several prominent neoconservatives were interviewed by *Vanity Fair* before the election, and they took advantage of the opportunity to blame all the failures in Iraq on the Bush administration, while accepting none of the blame for peddling their crackpot ideas to the credulous. Richard Perle told *Vanity Fair* that "you have to hold the president responsible" and that "I'm getting damned tired of being described as an architect of the war." Kenneth Adelman, who famously predicted that Iraq would be a "cakewalk," now says that Bush's national-security team is "the most incompetent . . . in the post-war era" and that "these are not serious people." Frank Gaffney told the magazine that "[Bush] doesn't in fact seem to be a man of principle," and Eliot Cohen sees failure in Iraq: "I do think it's going to end up encouraging various strands of Islamism . . . and probably will bring de-stablization of some regimes of a more traditional kind, which already have their problems."

Now, the chickenhawks are all upset. In a National Review Online symposium, some of them attacked *Vanity Fair* for being dishonest. Michael Ledeen claimed to have been the victim of an earlier smear piece in its pages. What Mr. Ledeen does not explain is why, if he was convinced of the dishonesty of *Vanity Fair*, he agreed to be interviewed by the magazine in the first place. Indeed, as Daniel Larison has noted, this is a curious defense to hear from these would-be masters of the universe. Who would trust the neocons to run the world when they are so easily outwitted by a high-end celebrity-gossip magazine?

Several others claim to have believed that *Vanity Fair* would not publish their burblings until after the election. Another curious defense. If they did not feel that what they said would be seen as betraying the Bush administration, why would they want their musings kept under wraps until after the election?

Others, such as David Frum, complain that their words have been taken out of context. Oddly, such concerns have never before troubled Mr. Frum, who has made a name for himself smearing paleoconservatives by taking their words out of context.

It is easy to see why Mr. Frum is worried. Frum told *Vanity Fair* that "I always believed as a speechwriter that if you could persuade the president to commit himself to certain words, he would feel himself committed to the ideas that underlay those words. And the big shock to me has been that although the president said the words, he just did not absorb the ideas. And that is the root of, maybe, everything." Had I said that, I would be worried about others reading my remarks and concluding that I was a vain, arrogant, self-serving knave.

Paleoconservatives have been trying for years to warn other conservatives that the neocons are a deceitful lot who peddle ideas that are more Marxist than conservative and vilify all who disagree with them. Maybe, just maybe, other conser-

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vatives will begin to listen after this latest example of neocon treachery.

—*Tom Piatak*

FORGOTTEN STRIPPERS

In 1994, the Republicans, for the first time in 40 years, took control of both Houses of Congress. In 2000, after some controversy, the GOP secured the presidency. Now, they have lost both houses and look to be well on their way to losing the presidency in 2008. Parties lose when they don't give their supporters what they want. And, while the Iraq quagmire would probably have brought the Republicans down anyway, they could have come a lot closer to retaining some of their seats if they had kept their base happy.

The funny part is that their supporters were very clear about what they wanted, and it would have been easy for the party to give it to them. They wanted an end to the culture created, over the last 50 years, by "activist judges." Our culture has been formed by judge-made rules handed down by the Supreme Court and the state courts. No legislature would have done what they did. No legislature would have removed prayer from public schools and crèches from the town square at Christmas; found a constitutional right to sodomize; protected pornographers and flag burners; facilitated unlimited abortion; upheld affirmative action; interfered with school discipline; and created an infinite number of new rights for criminals. The result is a vulgar mess. The Republicans' supporters—and lots of Democrats—hate it. Is there an easy way to end it?

Article III of the Constitution gives the people the choice: A simple law passed by Congress and signed by the President can remove—or, in the parlance, "strip"—any class of case from the Supreme Court's jurisdiction. That means the Court cannot lawfully interfere with the issue anymore. The stripped issues go to the states to be decided by their legislatures or courts. If the people in Wisconsin want prayer back in the schools, it's back. The same goes for "gay marriage," abortion, pornography, and the rest of the culture-war issues. Over time, the people would recover their culture. The Republicans had the opportunity to deliver a prize beyond price. They just had to grasp it.

Instead, the Bush administration supported strippers to keep the courts out of Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib but not to stop their cultural incursions. The Detainee Treatment Act of 2005 stripped the courts of the power to hear Guantanamo cases. The Supreme Court, however, in *Hamdan* v. *Rumsfeld* (2006) ruled the stripper did not apply to cases already pending. Since almost every Guantanamo detainee was part of a class action, the Bush administration passed the Military Commission Act stripper, this time saying *we really mean it* by specifying that it applied to pending cases. The Military Commission Act of 2006, signed on October 17, 2006, strips American courts of the power to hear any case brought by anyone designated by the President as an "enemy combatant."

But the Bush administration would not support strippers to restore a civil culture. Even after the House of Representatives passed a "gay marriage" stripper (2004) and two Pledge of Allegiance strippers (2004 and 2006), the Bush administration would not support them. None of the House-passed strippers were introduced in the Senate.

Why didn't the Republicans give their supporters what they wanted and end the judge-made culture? The Republicans refused because they are convinced that court bashing is a successful campaign issue. After all, it had won elections for them since 1968. They preferred the issue to the solution. They have lost their souls.

The Democrats, if they get the White House in 2008, will have the power to pass some strippers themselves. Will they? At first glance, that seems about as likely as Bin Laden converting to Catholicism. Democrats opposed the Military Commission and Detainee Treatment Act strippers and the House "gay marriage" and Pledge of Allegiance strippers, so one might expect them to continue opposing such actions. Indeed, on the House floor, they called strippers "unconstitutional," "immoral," "discriminatory," and "dangerous nonsense." They have argued for the last 50 years that the Supreme Court is the ultimate arbiter of what the Constitution means. Indeed, they have obtained better results from the Court than they ever could have hoped to get from an accountable body. They opposed strippers intended to end school busing in 1972. They opposed strippers to restore school prayer in 1979, 1982, and 1985, although polling data consistently reports that around 75 percent of Americans support prayer in public schools.

The Democrats, however, may surprise us. They might do some selective stripping—like rolling back some of the President's civil-rights intrusions. To do so would be popular with their base and with some conservatives who believe that, thanks to such measures as the Bush administration's USA PATRIOT Act, we are losing our liberties. Historically, Democrats have not hesitated to use strippers: FDR, early in his presidency, signed the Norris-Laguardia Act (1934), which stripped federal courts of the power to issue injunctions in labor disputes. Will they try to repeal the Guantanamo strippers? Probably not. When they are responsible for conducting the war, they won't desire judicial interference any more than the Republicans do.

Sen. Charles Schumer, chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, intends to make the Democrats a majority party again: "We must make sure the middle class has a strong voice in Washington." Trouble is, November 7 exit polls showed Democrats are the party of extremes: in wealth, income, and education. For example, they ran strongest with high-school dropouts and those with graduate degrees. They have a definite problem with ordinary people. And, of course, religious people. Why not pick up the ball the Republicans dropped and pass a school-prayer stripper? It would greatly discomfit the Republicans. The middle class would like it. It would be a start.

—*William J. Quirk*

THE NEXT ABORTION BATTLE

Abortion opponents in South Dakota had a simple message for voters in the midterm election: Vote what you know in your heart is right. More than 148,000 people heeded the call, voting to retain a state law that banned virtually all abortions in South Dakota. Their numbers, however, amounted to just 44 percent of the electorate.

What had been the nation's most restrictive ban on abortions died as the final votes were tallied in the early morning hours of November 8. Supporters of the ban—which was passed by the state legislature and signed into law by Gov. Mike Rounds earlier in 2006—hoped it would send South Dakota on a collision course with *Roe* v. *Wade*. But a majority of voters called off the assault.

The outcome in South Dakota serves

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as a sobering benchmark for the pro-life movement. The state is among the most socially conservative in the nation, and, if abortions can't be banned in South Dakota, pro-lifers face a long march to reach their goal of eradicating abortion in the United States.

Despite the defeat, pro-lifers in South Dakota aren't waving any white flags. In the days following the election, supporters of the ban pondered their next move, and there will almost certainly be another attempt by pro-life lawmakers to restrict abortion during South Dakota's 2007 legislative session.

The South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families [*sic*], which fought to overturn the ban, succeeded by splintering off enough voters who oppose abortion but also believe there should be exceptions. The ban in South Dakota contained no explicit exceptions for women who are victims of rape or incest. Supporters of the ban tried to counter voters' concerns with two arguments. They argued that a life, even one conceived through rape, is still an innocent human being who deserves protection under the law. They also pointed out that the ban still allowed women to use emergency contraception if they thought they might be pregnant.

The Sioux Falls *Argus Leader*, the state's largest newspaper, commissioned a poll two weeks before the election. The poll foreshadowed the election results, finding a ten-percentage-point margin between those who supported the ban and those opposed to it. The same poll asked those who opposed the ban whether they would support ending abortion if a law contained clear exceptions for rape and incest. Fifty-six percent who opposed the ban in its current form said they would support a measure that included such exceptions.

When lawmakers navigated their abortion bill through the legislature, they beat back several attempts to add exceptions to the law. They argued exceptions—particularly a broadly interpreted exception for women's "health"—would do nothing to stop abortion on demand.

But now some lawmakers are mulling how rape and incest exceptions could work. Would, for example, a woman need to file a police report claiming her pregnancy was caused by rape or incest before being allowed to obtain an abortion? Would there need to be an arrest or prosecution? Or could a woman simply show up at the state's lone abortuary in Sioux Falls and claim she was raped? And, if such exceptions were in state law, could there be constitutional challenges under the Equal Protection Clause?

These are murky issues. But there's a good chance that some South Dakota lawmakers will take them on. If a law emerges with rape and incest exceptions, it won't please everybody in the pro-life community, but it could please a majority of voters. Of the 814 pregnancies that were terminated in South Dakota in 2004, only a small handful are thought to be the result of rape or incest.

How would abortion supporters react? They weighed their options carefully when the first ban passed. They could have taken the well-trodden path to court. But after deliberating, they chose to take their case to the voters, mindful that, if the people upheld the ban, they could still seek refuge in the judiciary.

Faced with a law that contains rape and incest exceptions, abortion supporters would probably not repeat the process of collecting signatures and referring the issue to votes. The effort and ensuing campaign were expensive, costing both

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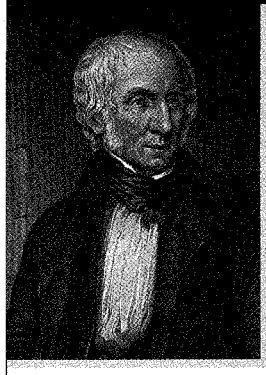

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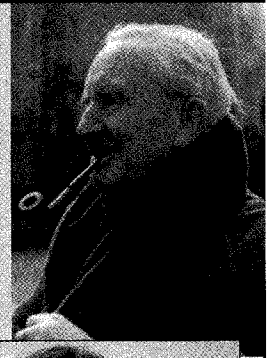

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sides millions of dollars. What's more, they would probably lose in Round Two, if the polls are to be believed.

Most likely, they would take it to the judge. And pro-lifers in South Dakota would be back on the road to the Supreme Court.

—*Jonathan Ellis*

RUMMY REDUCED

Had President George W. Bush fired Donald Rumsfeld a month before, rather than a day after, November 7, the Republican Party could have retained control of both houses. Still, doing it late is better than not doing it at all. Rumsfeld was a liability and an embarrassment, the embodiment of all that went wrong in Iraq and a major culprit for much of it. He disregarded sound military advice, ruled by intimidation, and made grave strategic mistakes. To his credit, Rumsfeld developed a viable conceptual blueprint for a leaner, meaner 21st-century military. To his disgrace, he then got it bogged down in a distinctly mid-20th-century, labor-intensive, open-ended mission, a war based on flawed assumptions and unrealistic expectations.

The departure of the longest-serving secretary of defense in American history was not lamented even by his erstwhile neoconservative associates, who were quick to claim that he was not really one of them. Messrs. Perle, Frum, *et al.*, nimbly shifted from asking "How do we win?" to "Who screwed up?"—and the culprits were supposed to be in the White House and the Pentagon. But Rumsfeld's betrayal by Neocon Central was well deserved. He could not have been unaware that he was surrounding himself with riffraff of dubious integrity and uncertain loyalty.

In 2001, Rumsfeld made Richard Perle chairman of the Defense Policy Board—a position Perle had to resign in March 2003 after it was revealed that a venture-capital firm in which he was managing partner stood to profit from the Iraqi war. Another favorite, Douglas Feith, was crafting "intelligence" from whole cloth. Their Straussian mind-set was evident in Paul Wolfowitz's now famous *Vanity Fair* admission that, in seeking justification for war against Iraq, "for bureaucratic reasons we settled on one issue, weapons of mass destruction, because it was the one reason everyone could agree on."

They and Rumsfeld joined forces to construct an Iraqi pseudoreality many years before the war, notably through the Project for a New American Century, founded in 1997. There was no proof, then or later, that Iraq had WMD capabilities; but Rumsfeld's zeal on this subject bordered on fanaticism, memorably exemplified in his 2002 Beria-like quip that the failure of U.N. arms inspectors to find weapons of mass destruction "could be evidence, in and of itself, of Iraq's noncooperation."

Rumsfeld was equally wrong in his conviction that U.S. troops would be greeted as liberators by the Iraqis. His initial plans, providing for only 30,000 U.S. troops in Iraq three months after the invasion, were followed by assurances to Jim Lehrer that "There is no question but that they would be welcomed. Go back to Afghanistan, the people were in the streets playing music, cheering, flying kites." He was also wrong in his expectation that a government led by someone such as Ahmed Chalabi would be able to take swift control and that, faced with defeat, the fighting remnant of Saddam's loyalists would surrender, assimilate, or be destroyed. Rumsfeld was not only wrong, he was seen to be wrong: The lean and mean force that so swiftly took Baghdad was far too light to occupy, secure, and defend the country after the war.

The deeper problem with Rumsfeld has less to do with Iraq than with his global vision. He remains an advocate of NATO expansion into Russia's backyard in Georgia and the Ukraine, and he still favors an antimissile defense system built on assumptions that are both politically and technically flawed. The 1999 "Rumsfeld Report" stated that this system was needed because "a number of countries with regional ambitions do not welcome the U.S. role as a stabilizing power in their regions and . . . they want to place restraints on the U.S. capability to project power or influence into their regions."

Eight years and over 3,000 American soldiers' lives later, Rumsfeld still doesn't understand that the pursuit of global hegemony—for that is what the unrestrained projection of power is all about—will doom America. A "doctrine" that demands the capability to project power everywhere and all of the time cannot be sustained economically, physically, or culturally, because the threat is limitless, and the commitment, open-ended. No man who succumbs to this dangerous obsession should be allowed to head the Pentagon.

Rumsfeld's firing heralds the endgame in Iraq; it will be messy, and the accompanying score settling in Washington will not be for the faint of heart.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

CURTIS CATE, R.I.P.

We were deeply saddened to learn that one of this magazine's longest-running contributors, Curtis Cate, passed away on November 16. Born on May 22, 1924, in Paris to American parents, Mr. Cate was educated in England at Winchester College and Magdalen College, Oxford, and studied Spanish at Harvard and Russian at France's School of Oriental Languages. He served as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Army during World War II and fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

As a journalist, Mr. Cate worked for the *New York Herald Tribune* and served as an editor for the *Atlantic Monthly* for 11 years. His freelance work has appeared in countless newspapers and magazines. He was also the author of several books, including *Antoine de Saint-Exupery: His Life and Times* (for which he was given the *Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Aéro-Club de France*); *George Sand: A Biography*; *The Ides of August: The Berlin Wall Crisis*; *The War of the Two Emperors: The Duel Between Napoleon and Alexander—Russia, 1812*; *André Malraux: A Biography*; and *Friedrich Nietzsche*.

Mr. Cate's final *Chronicles* piece, a "Letter From Berlin," appears in this issue. He will be sorely missed.

—*The Editors*

OBITER DICTA

Our poetry this month is provided by **Robert Beum**, who resides in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Dr. Beum's poems and essays have appeared in the *Sewanee Review*, *National Review*, the *Christian Century*, *Prairie Schooner*, and the *Southwest Review*, among others. His most recent books are *Classic European Short Stories* and *Modern British Essayists*.

Our cover is a reprise of the July 1991 cover, by renowned artist **Warren Chappell**.

Our interior art is provided by **Melanie Anderson** and **Nicholas Garrie**. Mrs. Anderson, our designer, received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University. Mr. Garrie, who works in a variety of media, hails from Rockford.

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by Thomas Fleming

Two Oinks for Democracy

In the year 2000, many conservatives, with or without holding their noses, turned out to vote for George W. Bush. One of the Republicans' strongest selling points during the campaign was Governor Bush's oft-repeated declaration that his administration would not engage in nation-building experiments. After eight years of President Clinton's busybodying in the Balkans, where he capped his folly by launching an unjustifiable war against what little we had allowed to survive of Yugoslavia, George Bush's pronouncements fell upon conservative ears like rain on the parched desert floor. Hopes were confirmed by his promise to name Colin Powell as secretary of state.

Some conservatives, including several of us at *Chronicles*, were disturbed by the men of evil omen who assisted the campaign and were likely to play a major role in a Bush administration: the sinister Richard Perle and his bumbling apprentices, Paul Wolfowitz and Doug Feith; the naive and inexperienced Condoleezza Rice; and, worst of all, the dark lords of the Republican Party, Richard Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld's management style and commitment to high-tech warfare had, even then, made him an object of suspicion to experienced military men.

As everyone knows, our suspicions turned out to be justified—in spades—and, six years after George Bush's inauguration, we are bogged down in a deepening civil war in Iraq and a conflict in Afghanistan that more and more reminds us of why the Russians had to leave. Though it would be bad manners to say so to the President, Governor Bush has been proved right. The government of the United States has no mission or mandate to rebuild other nations in its own image, and our two little experiments have proved to be a disaster for the miserable laboratory rats we are forcing to run the maze of post-American democracy and international human rights.

Much of our criticism of the President's foreign policy has been made on the level of principle: Preemptive wars, inherently wrong, would eventually justify the militarization of American life and the final destruction of our constitutional order. Reconstruction abroad would inevitably justify reconstruction at home. But the "Just Argument" (borrowed without apologies from Aristophanes' *Clouds*) has been shouted down by the Unjust Argument, which has stolen the clothes and assumed the appearance of justice. Many otherwise decent conservatives now mistake the American Greatness propaganda of *National Review* and the *Weekly Standard* for authentic American patriotism, and they interpret any principled criticism as a sign of cowardice and disloyalty. If we wish to persuade our friends, we can no longer speak as Christians or old-school republicans and patriots, and we shall have to abandon the high ground of morality, law, and the Constitution and descend into the political mire to wallow with the demon-haunted swine, grunting hosannas to American imperium without ever lifting their snouts from the trough. Once we get accustomed to the company—and the smell—we are ready to ask the only question these people, who have so seriously misled the President and his party, are willing to entertain: What's in it for us?

The President's advisors do not like history, because, like Greek tragedy, it teaches all the wrong lessons. During the Cold War, the United States invested a great deal of energy and money into putting Germany and Japan back on their feet, staving off the Soviets' reach into Southern Europe, and setting up pro-American social democracies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We certainly achieved our objectives in Germany and Japan, though at the price of creating serious economic rivals; Greece was rescued from the jaws of Stalin, and CIA support for Christian Democrats and Socialists kept Italy firmly within our orbit. The assassination of Salvador Allende in the course of a capitalist coup, while not the cleanest operation the CIA has ever undertaken, had salutary effects that are enjoyed by most Chileans to this day. To multiply instances might seem unpatriotic, though I am not moralizing. Our successes, clean as well as dirty, all have something in common. With the exception of Japan, all these countries were populated by European Christians who maintained or at least remembered traditions that included the rule of law, hard work, self-restraint, and the political participation of the responsible classes. Japan was a civilized and disciplined country that had been absorbing many Western political and legal concepts since the Meiji restoration (1868).

By contrast, our experiments in Vietnam, most of Latin America, and Africa foundered on the rock of non-European populations whose legal, political, and social traditions were not very compatible with our own. In Vietnam, we murdered President Diem and overthrew his Christian and pro-Western regime under the delusion that Asian Buddhists would repel the communists by offering a nonrevolutionary socialist alternative. In El Salvador, we opposed both communists and Catholic rightists in order to promote an American socialist professor who had little support among his own people. But why go on enumerating our failures—in Rhodesia and Nicaragua, for example, where American policies unintentionally led to the installation of communist regimes? Yes, there are fluctuations, but the good news, for those who savor the taste of reality, is that Danny Ortega is back and, failing a CIA coup, will soon be joining Hugo Chavez's alliance against America. Ortega had tried, twice before, to return to power, but this time, the road was smoothed for him by Donald Rumsfeld, who also installed the far more dangerous Nancy Pelosi into the House Speaker's chair.

Any effort to build a stable regime friendly to U.S. interests will have to construct its programs on a population that has some understanding of the West and some institutions—religious or

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cultural—compatible with our own. On this basis, we can appreciate at least one of the reasons why we have chosen Israel—for all the troubles this special relationship has cost us—to be the focus of our influence in the Middle East: Israel is a European colony in the Arab world. For a similar reason, we have relied on the Turkish military, a secular force up till recently, to repress Islamic fanaticism and cooperate with us and our democratic satellite in the Middle East. By the same token, we should realize why Lebanon was a lost cause as soon as we abandoned her Christian leadership, and why the secular regime of Saddam Hussein was probably the nearest thing to a gang we could do business with in the Arab world. As deplorable as we might find President Reagan's support of Iraq against Iran, no one can deny the Machiavellian logic that would dictate such a policy.

Looking at ourselves, it is not too difficult to understand why Germany and Italy would be willing to follow our lead in the 1950's. Victorious in war and rich beyond belief, the United States possessed an exuberance and boyish self-confidence that impressed all but the most civilized. Even Marxists knew, in their hearts, that we were the wave of the future. Why else did so many American leftists invest in the stock market, and why else did so many Soviet officials squirrel away their stolen assets in capitalist banks? Khrushchev's famous "We will bury you" was the desperate threat of an ideology that had lost every argument and had to place its last hope in oversized ICBMs with nuclear warheads.

The builders of the British and Roman Empires were tough men who had faith in their countries and did not spend much time analyzing motives or expressing compassion for the nations they subjugated. For good and ill, we Americans were like that once when we conquered the Philippines and sent Blackjack Pershing down into Mexico to ferret out Pancho Villa. In two world wars, Wilson and Roosevelt obscured our aims with globalist platitudes, but American soldiers did not fight to end all wars or eliminate fascism or impose democracy. They fought for their country and for the women and children they thought would suffer if the other side won.

Even down to the end of the 1960's, we Americans believed in ourselves and in our famous "way of life." We were proud of the heroes who were praised in our history books and celebrated in films and music. Can you imagine anyone today making John Wayne's *The Alamo* or having a pop-music hit with "The Battle of New Orleans"? These days, our heroes are rappers gunned down in drug deals that have gone bad.

There was more than a bit of the Potemkin Village in the postwar Americanism with which we reassured ourselves in a darkening world threatened by communism and moral dissolution, but every generation fights with the weapons it has. By the end of the 1970's, however, as my generation was finally exchanging its beer bongs and Hendrix records for the levers of power, we told a quite different story about ourselves. Our old heroes were patriarchal racists who oppressed women and exterminated Indians—whoops, the indigenous peoples of North America. They were capitalists who exploited the poor and subjugated Latin America, and Christian bigots who hated Jews and repressed homosexuals. The only ray of hope was represented by minority leaders who fought to eliminate the American Way of Life and replace it with a synthesis of the best elements of Lenin and Andy Warhol: bad art imposed by bayonets and state-subsidized perversity.

Not everyone believes all of the self-hating American myth, but most of us believe some of it. We may not condemn George Washington, though we no longer celebrate his birthday, but even conservative Republicans pretend to revere Martin Luther King, Jr. We say we are Christians and revere marriage, but the best our conservative politicians can do is to promote "civil unions," which is just another term for "gay marriage." At best, we are half-hearted defenders of our way of life, and, at worst, we hate every good thing our country has ever stood for—and not just our country, but our civilization (European) and our religion (Christian). The most we can do, apparently, is to prattle endlessly about values and some generic sense of religiosity that binds violent Muslims with pacifist Buddhists.

Our lack of confidence in ourselves and our self-defeating sense of guilt stem in part from our ignorance of who we are. Our country, according to neoconservatives and other leftists, is only an advertising slogan, and anyone who learns to mouth the slogan, after a few days on American soil, makes a better American than a war hero descended from ten generations of patriotic Americans. We do not offer the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan the "nation" of Washington and Jefferson or even the "nation" of Lincoln and Wilson. Our nation-builders say openly and plainly that they expect to bribe these poor benighted Muslims into an orgy of fast food and pornography, in the course of which they will forget the religion and history of their ancestors and be enrolled as honorary Californians. If only Osama bin Laden could afford a membership in the Playboy Club; if only Mohammed Atta had gone to college.

I have never forgotten a conversation I had a few years ago in Israel, when a group of us had a meeting with a high-level academic advisor to the Likud Party. In discussing the Palestinian question, we brought up the financial angle. How much would it take, per person, to persuade Palestinians to give up their extravagant claims? How much for Israelis to abandon the settlements? With some warmth, the Israeli explained that he had served his country as a paratrooper, and his son was now doing the same. Not a year went by that he did not receive offers from great universities—London, Harvard, Berkeley—but Israel was his country, and he would never abandon her. By implication, he meant that some Palestinians believed as he did. There are some things that money cannot buy—among them, love and hate.

We are now learning a costly lesson in Iraq. No matter how many lives we sacrifice and how many billions we squander, we can only make things worse both for the Iraqi people, whose country we have destroyed, and for our own people, who are now hated around the globe as a nation of ruthless imperialists. In pulling out of Iraq—which is only a matter of time—we shall taste the bitterness of defeat, and not for the first time. According to *Vanity Fair,* Richard Perle now says Iraq was a mistake, and David Frum blames everything on the President. As the Gadarene swine, driven by the demons of greed and power, go over the cliff, the good little piggies can get back to the business of looking after their own and the American interest.

No change of heart can ever bring back either the Iraqi or the American dead, but, on the low, amoral level at which I have pitched my discourse, I can say that we are learning the valuable lesson that Governor Bush, before his administration was overtaken by catastrophe and corrupted by cynics, tried to teach the American people. Self-interest is the highest virtue of democratic capitalism, and it is time for us to return to the good old American practice of looking out for number one. There is a war to win against the enemies of America and Christendom. But that war can only be waged here. ◁

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* * ! THE BOARD LIGHTS UP ! * *
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by Robert Beum

Suddenly everyone brightens and laughs Yes!
and cheers him—he wins, we win. Just being here!
And God so loved the pinball universe . . .
Dazzle of being here! There may be more.

At a Disco

by Robert Beum

Gyrating on my own? Might be a dance
for someone savaged. Give this boy a step
as slow, as close, as what you'd like to last
like music making gold and silver warm.

An Upstairs

by Robert Beum

They'd built that house up to the sun and moon.
We opened windows and the stars fell in
with all-night stories—who'd not stay awake
to hear star children beat the levelling years?

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by Joseph Sobran

On Being "Right Wing"

As I write these words, just after the November 7 elections, liberal Democrats are enjoying a well-earned gloat on their victory over the right wing. Just one question: What does *right wing* mean?

I've puzzled over this question for years. I've also posed it to liberals, who can't really answer it. They apply this term, always censorious, to anarchists, who want no government at all, and to fascists, who want government without limits. Also to conservatives, who want government defined and limited.

Monarchism, it seems, is right wing; so is libertarianism. So are theocracy, Ayn Rand's atheistic objectivism, states'-rights constitutionalism, federalism, plutocracy, oligarchy, militarism, "isolationism," neoconservatism, feudalism, *laissez-faire* capitalism, classical liberalism, racialism, antisemitism (but also Zionism), "McCarthyism," some forms of populism, most forms of nationalism, all forms of anticommunism—just about everything, it seems, but socialism and, perhaps, nudism. Such causes as Prohibitionism, Clinton-hating, and opposition to abortion are also right wing. The term is worse than indefinable; it is simply incoherent.

The left-wing paradigm is pretty simple: communism. True, there are sectarian splits on the left—Bolsheviks *versus* Mensheviks, Stalinists *versus* Trotskyites—but these aren't disputes over basic principles. Liberals are just piecemeal socialists, pursuing the agenda more gradually than Reds, maybe, but it's the same agenda.

Consider feminism. Such feminist leaders as Betty Friedan, Bella Abzug, and Susan Brownmiller, for example, started out as commies. I once called feminism "the ladies' auxiliary of socialism," and I still think of it that way. Everything is the state's business, after all, so feminists can favor "choice" in abortion without really objecting to forced abortion in Red China. If China has a "population problem" (and, to the left, population is always a problem for the state), well, abortion is, naturally, one solution. Voluntary or compulsory? That's a detail, a matter of "policy."

But what is the common denominator of all the things liberals censure as right wing? A logician would have difficulty specifying it. Maybe it's not a property, but an attitude. Anyone who opposes socialism for any reason is *ipso facto* "right wing," and, of course, that's bad. Which is to say, *right wing* means whatever liberals dislike.

Now, you'll notice I'm using a rather quaint vocabulary here, the almost-obsolete language of definite creeds and principles. Liberals, especially in America, shy away from such explicit avowals. They prefer to divide things into the moralistic categories of *progressive* and *reactionary*, but these terms raise their own questions. What does the "progressive" progress toward?

Why, toward socialism, of course! That wasn't so hard, was it? And the "reactionary" resists progress. Scratch the liberal's exasperating evasiveness, and this is what it all comes to. He instinctively doesn't want us to know what he's talking about. In fact, and this both excuses and aggravates his fault, he doesn't want to know it himself.

Government, George Washington is supposed to have said, is neither reason nor persuasion, but force. The more government we have, the greater the ratio of force to freedom; this is almost self-evident. Every new law is at once a demand for obedience and a threat of punishment. Yet it rarely occurs to the liberal; for him, no matter how big and powerful the state gets, there is hardly such a thing as too much government, or even enough. There is no point at which he feels that his dreams have finally come true, that the time has come not to make even more laws but to repeal some.

Such simple, philosophically obvious thoughts, needless to say, will strike the liberal as "right wing." In a strange sense, he is extremely conservative. It just doesn't cross his mind that the modern state may be fundamentally deranged; he feels entirely at home in it. He is anything but a critical Socrates where government is concerned. Quite the contrary.

And despite his curious reputation as an opponent of war, the liberal accepts the necessity and legacies of past wars, especially the U.S. Civil War and World War II, and he regards Presidents Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt as heroic, virtually sacred figures. He not only pardons but celebrates the lies and crimes by which they induced and conducted those extremely bloody wars. After all, both conflicts helped to create the monolithic Leviathan state to which he is attached. How could they have been wrong?

Liberalism has made it difficult to think or speak lucidly about the modern state. Its devious semantics protect that state's totalitarian presuppositions from exposure and scrutiny, planting the assumption that any form of opposition to the growth of the state is retrograde, "reactionary." This is what makes so many disparate, mutually incompatible things "right wing" in the liberal mind.

The astute reader will have noticed an anomaly in this account. Though liberals have designated neoconservatives as right wing, such neocons as Charles Krauthammer and William Bennett have accused more traditional conservatives of "fascism." I'm far from the first to suggest that most of the neocons are essentially liberals rather than genuine conservatives, and I think this hostility to the so-called Old Right clinches the point. What is remarkable is that these people nevertheless covet the conservative label. And what is deplorable is that they have been allowed to usurp it in such formerly conservative precincts as *National Review*.

Which brings me back to the recent elections. The Republican rout may perhaps be seen as a referendum on neoconservatism—or, more precisely, on what happens when that ideology is substituted for the real thing. If *this* is conservatism, the voters said, maybe liberalism deserves another chance.

In some respects, the Democrats now seem more conservative than the Republicans. Whether this will turn out to be a tragedy for conservatism, or an opportunity for recovery, remains to be seen. ◁

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The Declaration of Independence and Philosophic Superstitions

by Donald W. Livingston

It is common among our political elites and pundits to link the Declaration of Independence with Abraham Lincoln, who found in it the ground and *telos* of the American nation: the Enlightenment doctrine that all individuals are endowed with rights that precede and are independent of any political society. To define these rights, we must bracket out all political tradition, because tradition is grounded in inherited authority, not in rational choice. Since a rational man is governed only by those rules he has imposed on himself, he must free himself from the prejudices, biases, myths, and superstitions of tradition. Only through an heroic act of philosophical reflection that logically (if not psychologically) brackets out these prejudices can he see things clearly. The free mind—the truly rational mind—is one that has collected itself within a philosophical vacuum untainted by the prejudices and contingencies of tradition.

Inside the philosophical vacuum, the rational man discovers that he is endowed with inalienable "natural rights" to life, liberty, and property. Upon entering political society, these rights can be restricted—but only with the individual's consent, or that of his freely chosen representatives. Lincoln, though unread in philosophy, had absorbed the rationalism of his age: "Happy day, when all . . . matters subjected, mind, all conquering mind, shall live and move the monarch of the world. Glorious consummation! Hail . . . Reign of Reason, all hail!"

Though fashionable, this rationalist philosophy of natural rights cannot be the guiding principle of the American regime, because it requires conditions that cannot be satisfied in any regime. Jeremy Bentham was right to describe the theory of natural rights as "nonsense on stilts." First, the principles of natural rights formed in the philosopher's vacuum are abstract and indeterminate. Without a tradition to give them content, they are empty and cannot guide political conduct of any kind. Second, in attempting to apply them, there is always a sense of arbitrariness and self-deception. This is inevitable because, being abstract and indeterminate, the principles need content, but the thinker can provide it only by smuggling in some favorite part of tradition, while passing the principles off as the work of pure reason independent of tradition. Consequently, the Enlightenment notion of reason is irrational: The principles formed in the philosopher's vacuum are either empty or arbitrary.

For example, the metric system is an abstract rational system that can be used to measure anything in the universe. Yet it cannot be a guide to measurement unless we know how long a meter is. And this, the abstract system cannot tell us. The length of the standard meter was a particular iridium bar, in a glass case, in a particular building in Paris. The length of that particular iridium bar was decided upon by certain authorities in a tradition. From the philosopher's vacuum, the length must appear arbitrary. Why couldn't it be the length of the king's foot or the circumference of the Duke d'Orléans' belly? The meter would still have 100 centimeters.

Or, to take another example: God, as Creator, requires our obedience to His will, which is transcendent and timeless. Yet we cannot properly know what the will of God is without becoming a loyal, diligent, and critical participant in a particular biblical tradition. Aristotle said there is no justice outside the *polis*. In saying this, he did not deny that justice is transcendent and timeless; yet he thought it could not be known, rationally explored, and enjoyed outside the tradition of the *polis*.

For the same reason, there is no scientific knowledge of the physical world outside the tradition of scientific inquiry. To become a scientist is to offer oneself as an apprentice to master craftsmen in a tradition. At the dawn of the modern era, there were those who thought that science could not progress unless it, too, conformed to principles framed in the philosopher's vacuum. Just as natural rights are grasped through philosophic reason apart from a political tradition, Descartes thought that science had to free itself from scientific tradition and begin with absolutely certain principles. What Descartes, and all rationalists, do not understand is that certainty and justification are only achieved after rigorous inquiry by skillful and loyal participants in a tradition.

There are, and can be, no "natural rights" independent of tradition. Rights serve human interests and cannot be justified apart from a moral and political tradition informed by a vision of the human good. The natural-rights doctrine is a philosophic superstition. The members of a society, however, might mistakenly believe such rights exist and act in accord with that erroneous belief—but this would be corrupting. It is always corrupting to act in accord with principles that specify impossible conditions.

Such a society would be poisoned by massive resentment. Natural rights are not ideals of the human good that people might strive to achieve as an athlete strives to achieve a higher excellence; they are rights that everyone already has but which are not being recognized. And, no matter how far it expands the scope of individual rights, such a society can always be seen as hypocritical and a failure. In our society, many have seen the Declaration of Independence as a lie, because its writers did not recognize equal rights for women and the African population. Still others have found the Declaration to be a lie in acknowledging only negative rights (the right to be left alone in respect of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness) as opposed to positive rights (the right to acquire, at public

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expense, those things—health, education, property—necessary to pursue happiness). Latter-day Lincolnians insist that the Declaration allows only negative liberty. But why can't positive liberty, as well as negative liberty, be found in the philosopher's vacuum? With a little logical ingenuity and sufficient lack of shame, there is no end to what can be demanded by "natural rights."

A society obsessed with the philosophic fiction of natural rights necessarily encourages egoism and an ethic of autonomy—that the individual should be governed only by those rules he has imposed on himself. Such an ethic hollows out the substance of an inherited moral and political tradition, and people eventually lose the practical knowledge of how to behave.

Members of a society educated to believe that its ground and *telos* is the pursuit of natural rights will not acquire the virtues necessary to gain a connoisseur's understanding of their own moral tradition and how to reform it. Policy will be determined by merely deducing theorems from the natural-rights axioms framed in the philosopher's vacuum.

The ethic of choice making favored by natural-rights theory cannot stand on its own, though it does contain a grain of truth (as all philosophical superstitions do). For it is not mere abstract choices that we desire but *meaningful* choices, and those require the background of an inherited tradition. Stripped of one's culture, choice making loses its magic—and, certainly, its claim to be the ground and measuring rod of moral and political authority.

Belief in natural rights, if relentlessly pursued, generates self-deception, permanent resentment, and self-imposed ignorance about one's tradition and how to reform it to achieve a higher degree of human excellence. Such a society must eventually hollow out its inherited moral substance and go mad. This, however, seldom occurs, because no one can really believe in natural rights. Some favorite part of one's tradition is always smuggled in (often unknowingly) to give content to what would otherwise be a vacuous principle. Whenever the favored principle is threatened by the claim that it violates someone's natural rights, the philosophical fundamentalist suddenly retreats from his position of transcendence and produces an argument from circumstances. We are now told that natural rights cannot be applied without considering circumstances. So, how do we decide which circumstances can legitimately suppress my natural rights? The theory itself cannot give an answer, for circumstances were purged from the vacuum. Hence, the sense of arbitrariness and consequent resentment.

One must wonder how seriously Americans who approved the Declaration in 1776 believed in the *philosophical theory* of natural rights. It is also worth observing that the Constitution ratified in 1789 does not mention rights at all (except for "copyrights"). The ten amendments added to it were designed primarily to protect the corporate rights of the states, not the natural rights of individuals. The states wrote individual rights into their constitutions in accord with their distinct moral and political traditions.

It was Lincoln's war to crush the right of self-government in 11 American states, and the rhetoric he used to justify it, that introduced the philosophical superstition of natural rights as the goal and ground of an American nation-state. America, Lincoln famously said, is a country "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Since the rights of all men are the same everywhere in the world, the American tradition of a federation among sovereign states had to be eliminated, in favor of an all-powerful centralized regime. One cannot have different states giving different and conflicting interpretations of "the proposition."

Not only is Lincoln the rhetorical father of natural rights as the *telos* of a would-be American nation, he is also a perfect specimen of the syndrome of corruption, resentment, hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and self-deception to which the doctrine inevitably leads. In his speeches, Lincoln presented the conflict as a titanic struggle between two abstract moral and philosophical principles—between those who think slavery is "RIGHT" and those who think it is "WRONG." (Lincoln used those capital letters.) Lincoln presents himself and his party as taking the side of freedom, and Southerners as taking the side of slavery. This is not the language of a great statesman but of one calling forth the passions of hate and fear. Such rhetoric is a baneful part of the Lincoln legacy and animates the work of Straussians such as Harry Jaffa, who see traditional political theorists such as John C. Calhoun and M.E. Bradford as Nazis because their words were not adequately shaped by "the proposition."

Melanie Anderson

Such rhetoric is possible only in the heroic moment of natural rights as it transcends all tradition. But then, Lincoln was also a participant in the American political tradition, in which most everyone, including abolitionists, agreed that America is a white European polity. Neither the African population nor the Indians were to be social and political equals. The constitution of Lincoln's own state of Illinois prohibited the entrance of free blacks and mulattos. Those already in the state were not citizens; they could not vote, serve on juries, or testify against white people. Similar restrictions existed in other Northern states. Lincoln fully supported these oppressive codes. "I am not," he said, "nor have ever been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races." This Negrophobia was as firmly planted in New England; the policy of New Englanders was to rid themselves of the African population they acquired when they were masters of the slave trade. New England's best and brightest, Ralph Waldo Emerson, thought that innate inferiority doomed blacks to extinction: "[T]he black man declines. . . . It will happen by & by, that the black man will only be destined for museums like

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the Dodo."

In his first presidential campaign, Lincoln, who had not done anything in his own state to relieve the oppression of blacks, suddenly made an issue of opposing the extension of slavery into the western territories. (This was an imaginary horror since, in 1860, the total number of slaves in the western territories, where slavery could have expanded, was 17.) It was rank hypocrisy: What Lincoln really wished to do was prohibit the entrance of free blacks into the western territories, which, he insisted, "should be kept open for the homes of free white people." "Is it not rather our duty," he asked, "to make labor more respectable by preventing all black competition, especially in the territories?"

Lincoln's own final solution to the problem of slavery was deportation of the entire black population. In 1857, he supported a bill to deport the Negroes of Illinois. Deportation would free America, he said, from the "troublesome presence of free Negroes." As President, he looked all over the Western Hemisphere for land on which to colonize them. He even considered deporting them to Texas and Florida. Northwestern states, of course, were off the table.

For Lincoln, the Union was an end in itself, and the states, a mere means to that end—which is why he did not hesitate in brutally crushing those that sought to exercise their sovereignty. Like a worker in black magic, Lincoln conjured out of the Declaration a French Revolution-style unitary state—the very sort of entity from which the colonial representatives, in signing the Declaration, sought to free themselves.

Lincoln's retreat from heroic natural-rights transcendence to the special-pleading prisoner of circumstances is captured in the following passage, in which "dedication to the proposition" is united with Negrophobia:

> Negroes have natural rights . . . as other men have, although they cannot enjoy them here, and even Taney once said that "the Declaration of Independence was broad enough for all men." But though it does not declare that all men are equal in their attainments or social position, yet no sane man will attempt to deny that the African upon his own soil has all the natural rights that instrument vouchsafes to all mankind.

There we have it: To enjoy those "natural rights" that belong to men as men and that cannot be alienated by tradition, circumstances, or positive law, blacks must be deported to Africa.

Robert E. Lee freed his slaves not because he was "dedicated to the proposition" but because, as he put it, "slavery is unchristian." This disposition was found in many leaders of the Confederacy. If left alone, slavery would have been abolished in a reasonable time. Practical circumstances were such that extending bourgeois individual rights to an African population only two generations from tribal existence would have been difficult anywhere in the West. It would have required statesmanship, patience, good will, social stability, and economic prosperity. Lincoln's brutal invasion achieved an emancipation under the worst possible conditions: killing 25 percent of Southern men of military age; waging a scorched-earth war against civilians; destroying 60 percent of the region's capital; and making it a debtor region and an exploited colony of the United States for a century.

The philosophic doctrine of natural rights is not only a fertile ground for hypocrisy; it also occludes evil. Lord Acton described Lincoln's invasion as an "awful crime." But he had a perfect alibi. He was "dedicated to the proposition." In the 1950's, Camus sardonically observed that the flags flying over the Soviet gulags were the flags of human emancipation. Marxism, too, was "dedicated" to a proposition about universal human emancipation.

The Declaration of Independence is a *secession* document. Its first sentence declares a severing of the "bands" that had connected one "people" to another. The entities declaring a right to secede from Britain were not individuals but political societies. The Declaration's author, Thomas Jefferson, believed in individual rights, and he was inclined toward the rationalism I have criticized. But he thought these rights were best defined and protected, not by a centralized unitary state (as Lincoln did), but by a federal system of competing jurisdictions. Each state would have its own tradition of common law. And because the states are sovereign (*contra* Lincoln), they can protect their moral and political traditions by nullifying unconstitutional acts of the central government. It was Jefferson who introduced the concept of state "nullification" into legal discourse in the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 (as well as those of 1799, where the word first appears). Although Jefferson always sought to preserve the Union, he never regarded it as more than an instrument to protect the moral and political traditions of the several states. Concerning past and present New England secession movements, he wrote, in 1816, "If any state in the Union will declare that it prefers separation . . . to continuance in union . . . I have no hesitation in saying, 'let us separate.'"

For Lincoln, however, the Union was an end in itself, and the states, a mere means to that end—which is why he did not hesitate in brutally crushing those that sought to exercise their sovereignty. Like a worker in black magic, Lincoln conjured out of the Declaration a French Revolution-style unitary state—the very sort of entity from which the colonial representatives, in signing the Declaration, sought to free themselves. Few things reveal more clearly the deep fracture and incoherence of the American political tradition than that our political elites, following the Great Emancipator, think of the Declaration as a philosophical statement authorizing a nation-state endowed with the mission of establishing individual autonomy. ◁C▷

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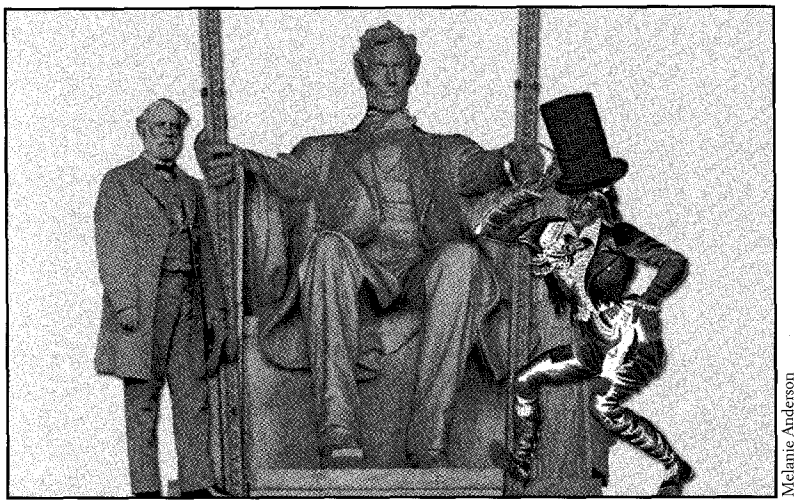
Nationalism or Patriotism?

Love of Idea *Versus* Love of Place

by Thomas Storck



Melanie Anderson

Those who know C.S. Lewis's short book *The Four Loves* will remember that Lewis speaks of the four different kinds of love: affection, friendship, eros, and charity. But, in a preliminary chapter about "likings and loves for the sub-human," he writes about "love of one's country" or patriotism. He points out that, in the first place, "there is love of home, of the place we grew up in or the places, perhaps many, which have been our homes; and of all places fairly near these and fairly like them; love of old acquaintances, of familiar sights, sounds and smells." Then he makes an important comment: "Note that at its largest this is, for us, a love of England, Wales, Scotland, or Ulster. Only foreigners and politicians talk about 'Britain.'" That is, patriotism encompasses primarily a *cultural*, not a *political* unity.

What can we glean from Lewis's account of patriotism? Actually, Lewis might have put patriotism in his next chapter, on affection, the kind of love we have for members of our family, for parents, children, brothers, and sisters. And the thing to note about patriotism, as about affection, is that it makes no pretense about the things, or people, we love. We love our family not because we claim our family is the best in the world (how could we ever know *that*?) but because it is ours. Within very broad limits, we are comfortable with it, we feel (more or less) relaxed within it, we understand its ways. Even of a very dysfunctional family, we might say that we understand its ways in a manner that we might not of a family that we recognize as (objectively) more healthy. That more healthy family is not our own, however much we might wish that our own family resembled it more. As Lewis said, "[A]lmost anyone can become an object of Affection; the ugly, the stupid, even the exasperating."

So with countries. It would surely be foolish for anyone to claim that his own country was the greatest in the world, for again, how could he ever know? Few of us have lived in enough places to make such a judgment, and the complexity of social life would, in any case, most likely lead us to say that, in some ways, this country is better, while, in other ways, that country is better. However, it is not by weighing such factors that we come to love our own country. We love it, as we love our families, because it is *ours*; we feel at home with it, and, however much we may dislike or even detest certain of its characteristics or habits, we know that we could never truly feel at home anywhere else.

Lewis speaks "of the place we grew up in or the places, perhaps many, which have been our homes; and of all places fairly near these and fairly like them; love of old acquaintances, of familiar sights, sounds and smells." He says nothing of political boundaries here. Indeed, he explicitly rejects such boundaries, for, by speaking of "a love of England, Wales, Scotland, or Ulster" and not of "Britain," which is the political unit, he indicates what surely is obvious, that patriotism grows from the local. And this must be true not just for the English, but for us as well. Love of our home city or locale, of our state or region—*e.g.*, the Midwest or the South—surely must precede love of the partial abstraction, the United States of America. I am not denying the possibility of a patriotism that involves the entire country, but I only note that it must begin with a locality and be based on a locality, if it is to be really patriotism and not its counterfeit, nationalism.

The two points, then, that we can deduce from the above discussion are these: Patriotism is love of something merely because it is our own (not because we claim it is the best), and patriotism always begins with the local.

C.S. Lewis further discusses the idea "that is sometimes

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called patriotism . . . that our own nation, in sober fact, has long been, and still is markedly superior to all others." He notes the obvious fact that every nation is apt to think in this manner and relates the following humorous story.

> I once ventured to say to an old clergyman who was voicing this sort of patriotism, "But, sir, aren't we told that *every* people thinks its own men the bravest and its own women the fairest in the world?" He replied with total gravity—he could not have been graver if he had been saying the Creed at the altar—"Yes, but in England it's true."

This story, by itself, ought to be enough to disabuse us of the notion that we or anyone else can rightfully consider his nation the best or greatest, for, if we consider it laughable in the case of England, surely we can see that they—or the French or Russians or Argentines—might consider it equally laughable in the case of us. No, this is not the sort of thing that constitutes genuine love of our own place.

The genuine patriotism that C.S. Lewis writes about has been almost entirely replaced with a nationalism that not only ignores the local but replaces love of one's own people with love of an abstract idea.

As to the second point—that patriotism is always local—that is likewise important. Governments have been established in many and diverse ways in the history of the world, and although, for the past 200 or so years, we have generally identified each political regime with a *nation*, in the sense of a presumed cultural or ethnic unity, this has been more of a fiction invented by politicians than a reality. The famous remark by some politician following the unification of Italy, "Now that we have created Italy we must create Italians," could equally be applied to many another country, such as Germany, where Bavarians were famous for their dislike of Prussians, or the Russian Empire, which included peoples as dissimilar as Lithuanians, Armenians, and Tartars, and even more the Soviet Union, which was explicitly based not on any cultural unity, real or feigned, but on socialist ideology. A Lithuanian patriot surely loved *his* small country, not the vast czarist empire or, still less, the Soviet incarnation of "socialism in one country."

And this brings us to our own land. The first thing to note about us is that, although it remains possible for us, the genuine patriotism that Lewis writes about has been almost entirely replaced with a nationalism that not only ignores the local but replaces love of one's own people with love of an abstract idea.

Now nationalism has not always meant the same thing in every place or age, but, I would maintain, it has always denoted something abstract, something that pretends to be patriotism but has nothing to do with affection for one's place and people. In 19th-century Europe, nationalism generally meant a supposed love of one's own people, but this love was founded not on place and familiar habits but on the abstraction of the semi-mythic *nation*. Nationalism in this sense was political, not cultural. Having created the abstraction "Italy" or "Germany," although peasants from Northern Italy or Northern Germany could not even fully understand the speech of their southern brethren, nationalists fought to unify everyone who was held to be their kith and kin into one political entity, which was to be beloved equally, no matter where one lived. Instead of loving one's valley or village, they were to love whatever territory happened to be included within the political boundaries of the artificially created abstraction. These political divisions were based on fictions. Why were the German-speaking Swiss excluded from Germany? Why were the Dutch, who speak what could be considered a low-German dialect, not regarded as German? Moreover, a traveler going from France into Italy in the 19th century would have noticed a gradual change of local dialect, from something recognizably French into something recognizably Italian. But where should the mystic national boundary be placed? Wherever it is placed is largely arbitrary.

These realities were no hindrance to the nationalists' project: The abstraction of the *nation* was what was important, not the real and concrete *place*. A real patriot would have loved his own village and region even if, perchance, a political boundary cut through it. A nationalist, on the other hand, loved his own people insofar as they were defined by a political boundary, or were held to be prevented unjustly from joining in that political unity, as in the case of Germans in Poland or Bohemia after World War I.

Not every nation has the same sort of nationalism. Sometimes, a nationalism has been based on the notion that the nation is the bearer of some universal message for mankind, as in the France of the Revolution and Napoleon. But this kind of nationalism is still an abstraction; it is not an affectionate love for one's own people and place. And a similar kind of nationalism has afflicted and poisoned our own notions of patriotism in the United States. Perhaps the clearest example of this comes from Woodrow Wilson's Second Inaugural Address (March 5, 1917): "We shall be the more American if we but remain true to the principles in which we have been bred. They are not the principles of a province or of a single continent. We have known and boasted all along that they were the principles of a liberated mankind."

In his January 31, 1990, State of the Union Address, President George H.W. Bush declared that "America, not just the nation but an idea, [is] alive in the minds of people everywhere. As this new world takes shape, America stands at the center of a widening circle of freedom—today, tomorrow, and into the next century."

And, in a notable example of the confusion of patriotism and nationalism, William Bennett, secretary of education in the George H.W. Bush administration, in an article, "Horatius at the Bridge," in the *Journal of Family and Culture*, wrote about the Roman hero Horatius, who held an army at bay on a narrow bridge so his fellow Romans might have time to cut the bridge behind him. He thus faced nearly certain death to save Rome. Bennett quotes from Thomas Macaulay's poem:

> Then out spake brave Horatius,

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The captain of the gate:
"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can a man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers
And the temples of his gods?"

This is certainly an example of real patriotism, "the ashes of his fathers / And the temples of his gods." But how, then, does Bennett continue? He writes of certain American high-school students who "saw no moral difference between the United States and the Soviet Union." And he comments,

> I have to wonder what Horatius would say about such moral confusion. I wonder what he would say to the greatest nation on earth; a democracy that has attained gifts of political and individual freedom equaled for centuries only in dreams; a country that raises some of its brightest children to regard the values of a totalitarian police state as morally commensurate with its own.

Now, whatever else Horatius might have felt about Rome, he died because Rome was *his*, not because he felt Rome had "attained gifts of political and individual freedom"—or any other gifts at all. We may hope that the inhabitants of each region of the earth love their own place, even those who are tragically forced into exile, as Solzhenitsyn continued to love Russia. He did not transfer his patriotism to the United States when he was forced to live here, even though he might have recognized that the American citizen had more of "political and individual freedom" than the Soviet citizen did. But Bennett confuses love of one's place with love of an idea. Would he have us cease to love our own place if, in the future, we no longer had those "gifts of political and individual freedom"?

The abstraction of American nationalism, then, lies in seeing this country more as an idea than as a real place. And, since this idea is held to embody "the principles of a liberated mankind," it follows quite logically that we have a right and a duty to extend that idea to the rest of the human race. Here is how Calvin Coolidge put it in his Inaugural Address (March 4, 1925):

> We stand at the opening of the one hundred and fiftieth year since our national consciousness first asserted itself by unmistakable action with an array of force. . . . Under the eternal urge of freedom we became an independent Nation. A little less than 50 years later that freedom and independence were reasserted in the face of all the world, and guarded, supported, and secured by the Monroe doctrine. . . . We made freedom a birthright. We extended our domain over distant islands in order to safeguard our own interests and accepted the consequent obligation to bestow justice and liberty upon less favored peoples. . . . Throughout all these experiences we have enlarged our freedom, we have strengthened our independence. We have been, and propose to be, more and more American.

I could easily supply a dozen more such quotes, but these must suffice to show the prevalence of our own brand of nationalism. And moreover, I submit that, in the United States, normal patriotism has been almost entirely swallowed up by such nationalism. That is, we have been taught from childhood to feel and to express patriotism as nationalism, so that whatever healthy patriotism exists among us is generally unable to articulate itself. Even if an American might feel a genuine love of people and place, as soon as he begins talking, he almost automatically speaks the language of nationalism, a nationalism that wants to assert not that this place is *mine*, and, thus, I love it with a love of affection, but that this place is *best*, and, therefore, the "less-favored peoples" of the world had better prepare to be governed and shaped by us since we hold in trust for them "the principles of a liberated mankind." Such nationalistic hubris should be repugnant not only to any Christian but to any honest man with a modicum of humility. But a true American patriotism, like a true English patriotism, must always be based simply on affection and must begin with the local, however far it might extend after that.

Love of our home city or locale, of our state or region—e.g., the Midwest or the South—surely must precede love of the partial abstraction, the United States of America, if it is to be really patriotism and not its counterfeit, nationalism.

How far can patriotism extend beyond the boundaries of one's own locale to embrace a wider entity such as, in our case, the vast United States? I think true patriotism becomes more difficult as the country for which we are supposed to hold it grows larger. Although, in the *Federalist*, the writers argued that, because of the unique features of the proposed Constitution, a republic of a larger size than the world had hitherto known could flourish, we must remember that Hamilton and Madison had in mind a country that extended, at the most, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. Perhaps even they would have been daunted by the notion of one extending across the entire continent and even beyond. (Moreover, we should keep in mind that they were addressing the political viability of such an expansive republic, not the possibility of patriotism.) But, in addressing this question, we must first examine the notion of a shared historical past. Lewis himself refers to it as "a particular attitude to our country's past."

> I mean to that past as it lives in popular imagination; the great deeds of our ancestors. Remember Marathon. Remember Waterloo. "We must be free or die who speak the tongue that Shakespeare spoke." This past is felt both to impose an obligation and to hold out an assurance; we must not fall below the standards our fathers set us, and because we are their sons there is good hope we shall not.
>
> This feeling has not quite such good credentials as the sheer love of home. The actual history of every country

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is full of shabby and even shameful doings. The heroic stories, if taken to be typical, give a false impression of it and are often themselves open to serious historical criticism.

Now we Americans, like the English, have such shared history, and it, too, is often "open to serious historical criticism" and equally "full of shabby and even shameful doings." Moreover, it has a somewhat artificial quality about it, in that it is officially taught and imposed (or, at least, it *was* in my schooldays) and extends backward beyond the real historical experience of many of our actual ancestors. Although many of us had no forebears in the United States during the Revolutionary War or even the Civil War, we are invited to appropriate for ourselves not only the Foundering Fathers but the Puritan settlers, and even to extend our historical memory back into medieval England. For, just as Lewis mentions the Battle of Marathon (surely not an English event!), we are invited to see ourselves as the heirs of Magna Carta, of the 1688 invasion of England that deposed the Catholic James II, and of the other events of what Herbert Butterfield called the Whig interpretation of history. This, in itself, should raise some questions for any Catholic, such as myself, with a sense of tradition.

The real issue, however, is whether a shared history, whether it be a true history or not, is sufficient to bind together people and places so far apart—whether a true patriotism can extend itself so far, or whether it necessarily becomes too attenuated. If Lewis thought that the United Kingdom was too large to serve as a genuine locus of patriotic affection, what are we to think of the United States?

At this point I must become less analytical, because I am less certain of what the truth is. I do confess that, during several long car trips that I took back and forth from Ohio to the Southwest during the 1970's, I felt a spontaneous affection for many of the small towns I passed through, especially for the more rundown and shabby ones. I did feel a kinship with them, although hardly with the shiny cities. Traveling across the country did truly, I think, awaken a kind of affection in me, though this had nothing to do with any shared historical memory—a memory that, for the most part, leaves me cold. So I am unwilling to assign any strict geographical boundaries to genuine patriotism, except to say that, if it is not rooted in one's own small place, then it probably will never be able to extend itself to anything as large as our entire country. Nor is there anything wrong, I think, in recognizing *degrees* of patriotism—less intense as one moves away from one's locale, more intense as we return to our own place. In my own case, I could never feel the same intensity of affection for any other place as I feel for Ohio, especially northwest Ohio, where I was largely reared.

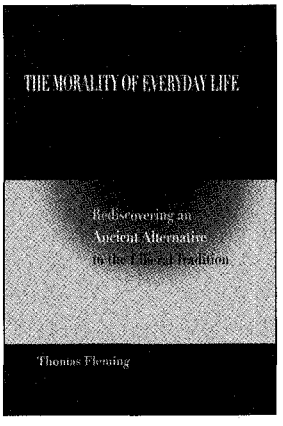
In any case, it is imperative that we both recognize and reject the abstraction of nationalism. America is not "an idea, alive in the minds of people everywhere." She is a place. Any notion of America as a project founded on certain propositions or ideas, which constitute the "principles of a liberated mankind," is totally foreign to any genuine patriotism. If we love our homes, our towns, our states, our country, we ought to love them as we love our parents, our siblings, our children. And that is rarely without some lively sense of their failings. For, as Lewis said of affection, it "will arise and grow strong without demanding any very shining qualities in its objects." ⟨C⟩

The Morality of Everyday Life:
Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition

by Thomas Fleming

What passes for conservatism today is really nothing more than the impossible moral and social theories of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which universal abstractions, such as democracy and equality, are presented as hard truths, when, in fact, they have never existed in any society in human history. Nonetheless, they are to be applied worldwide, at the tip of a spear (or cruise missile) if necessary.

Dr. Fleming's alternative is rooted in "everyday life," the local realities of blood and soil, custom and tradition, friendship and faith, and in the wisdom born of the experiences these realities beget. This wisdom finds expression in folktales and fables, in ancient Hebrew Scriptures and Greek philosophy, and in medieval casuistry. It is the method to solving ethical problems great and small, and it is the method that undergirds authentic conservatism.



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Harry Jaffa and the Historical Imagination

Reconfiguring Souls

by Tom Landess

Melanie Anderson

In the 1970's, Mel Bradford and I were teaching at the University of Dallas, which offered a doctoral program in politics and literature. Students took courses in both disciplines. It was a well-designed curriculum and produced some first-rate scholars.

Bradford had long been interested in political theory, but the program probably encouraged him to read more extensively in this area and to write articles and (eventually) books on the subject. In fact, the time arrived when he had published more commentary on political matters than the entire politics department. His articles on Abraham Lincoln—only four—caused the greatest stir, since, in them, he explicated texts in a way that revealed a Lincoln incompatible with the iconic figure on the penny and five-dollar bill.

When Bradford had become, as he ironically put it, "unbearably distinguished," Leo Paul de Alvarez, head of the politics department, arranged a formal debate on the subject of Lincoln and slavery: established scholar Harry Jaffa *versus* upstart Mel Bradford. Mel and I suspected that the true purpose of the occasion was to humiliate him in front of the U.D. student body and send him yelping into the bushes, tail between his legs.

I don't remember who kicked off the debate; but once under way, it took an unexpected turn. What was supposed to be a Jaffa-dominated exchange became, instead, a Bradford-dominated history lesson. Jaffa would offer abstractions about slavery in the South, and Bradford would correct him by citing primary historical sources (tax records, census reports, studies of wills filed in county courthouses)—evidence unknown to the faculty of Claremont. The audience might well have concluded that Bradford had read everything published on the subject, while Jaffa had read little more than the Lincoln-Douglas debates and the Declaration of Independence.

Jaffa, unfazed by this barrage of erudition, continued to counter facts with generalities. He apparently agreed with fellow Straussian Henry Ford, who once said, "History is bunk." I am sure Jaffa's admirers believed he won the debate that night. I doubt that anyone else in that huge crowd thought so.

The dynamic of the exchange between Bradford and Jaffa exposed for that audience the tendency of Straussians to dismiss any attention to the full historical context of a political document as "historicism," a form of relativism. Societies are transient; principles are eternal. It is dangerous to tie a document such as the Declaration of Independence to the time in which it was written. You might be snatched up by the Spirit of the Age and swallowed whole.

Yet, if we are to understand texts, history—composed of the particularities of time and place—is essential, if only to clothe bare-bones abstractions with flesh and blood. Like God, abstract truth is best understood when incarnate. Facts worry principles into shape, kneading them like biscuit dough. If principles are true, their substance remains unchanged.

More to the point, people who ignore history while finding Truth in political documents presume that they can transcend their own temporal and cultural limitations. It is bad enough to believe that past political texts were written not for the people of that age but for the gods. It is even worse to presume that you are one of those gods. When Archimedes said, "Give me a fulcrum and a place to stand, and I will move the whole world," he knew he would never have to make good on his boast. Straussians, however, believe they have found such a place, where they can transcend the limitations of time and culture to do what Archimedes could only dream of doing.

Thomas Hoving, former director of the Metropolitan Mu-

Contributing editor Tom Landess has written numerous books, some of which have appeared under his name.

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seum of Art, tells of passing the museum's Tang horse daily and viewing it with growing suspicion. Acquired in the 19th century as an authentic piece from the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618-906), the horse—to Hoving's educated eye—began to look more and more Victorian. On a hunch, he had it tested and found that, sure enough, it was a 19th-century fake.

The piece had fooled earlier experts because they were prisoners of their Victorian sensibilities, unable to see their own unique age in the lines of the counterfeit horse. Because he was trained to do so, Hoving could see both the genuine Tang elements and the Victorian overlay.

Will scholars in the late 21st century be able to see the late 20th-century bias in the godlike pronouncements of Jaffa and his disciples? Surely they will. Too many believe that all Dead White Males of consequence anticipated Francis Fukuyama in advocating some form of liberal democracy—the best Greek philosophers and historians, Shakespeare, even Machiavelli. Thus, the Ashbrook Center describes Leo Paul de Alvarez's argument in *The Machiavellian Enterprise* as follows: "As the 'first political philosopher to turn to the many instead of the few as the basis of rule,' claims de Alvarez, Machiavelli sought to replace the domination of the Christian Rome with a civil, secular, and egalitarian state."

If we are to understand texts, history—composed of the particularities of time and place—is essential, if only to clothe bare-bones abstractions with flesh and blood. Like God, abstract truth is best understood when incarnate. Facts worry principles into shape, kneading them like biscuit dough

This Fukuyavellian imposition of the Straussian political paradigm on the works of earlier writers is nothing less than a war on the past, with the ultimate goal to reduce it to rubble, plow it under, and sow salt on it. Yet, like the past, a text has an integrity all its own, a unique identity derived in large measure from the denotation of words, their connotations, and their historical context. If you are not attentive to these elements, a key word can undergo significant transmutation right before your uncomprehending eyes. Take, for example, the poem "Lapis Lazuli," by William Butler Yeats, which begins:

> I have heard that hysterical women say
> They are sick of the palette and fiddle-bow.
> Of poets that are always gay.

You can readily imagine what a current student at Brown University would make of these lines in a term paper entitled "Yeats and Female Homophobia." The poem deserves to be read in its original language rather than in the debased rhetoric of contemporary sexual politics, and that older language can only be recovered by adopting an historical perspective toward the text—easy enough to do with a poem this recent; not so easy, perhaps, in 100 years.

The typical Straussian refuses to submit to the formidable complexities of the past. After all, it is comfortable and self-serving to hear your own beliefs echoed in the voice of Shakespeare. So you treat the Bard as if he were living next door to you, mowing his lawn on weekends, fighting rush-hour traffic, listening to the Dixie Chicks.

Sometimes, however, you run across language that runs contrary to your Fukuyavellian thesis—and in the most embarrassing places. Take Harry Jaffa's problem with the rhetoric of Abraham Lincoln, who, he argues, refounded America as a nation informed by the principle of equality. Jaffa believes Lincoln hoped to create an egalitarian society in which blacks and whites would live together without prejudice. Lincoln's words tell a different story. Here is an excerpt from his debate with Stephen Douglas, held at Ottawa, Illinois, on August 21, 1858.

> I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and the black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which in my judgment will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that, notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. [Loud cheers.]
>
> I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas he is not my equal in many respects—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment.

In the same speech, Lincoln reassured the crowd that Southerners would not use force to impose blacks on Illinois, which had earlier outlawed their very presence: "There is no danger," he said, "that the people of Kentucky will shoulder their muskets, and, with a young nigger stuck on every bayonet, march into Illinois and force them upon us."

As for Jaffa's egalitarian dream, Lincoln undercut such an idea in his 1857 speech on the *Dred Scott* case. Here, he came out in favor of shipping them off to Africa to prevent miscegenation. ("I have said that the separation of the races is the only perfect preventive of amalgamation.") He admits that "colonization" (an Orwellian term) will be a daunting task, but that the Power of Positive Thinking can work to overcome the obstacles.

> Such separation, if ever effected at all, must be effected by colonization; and no political party, as such, is now doing anything directly for colonization. Party operations at present only favor or retard colonization incidentally. The enterprise is a difficult one; but "where there is a will there is a way;" and what colonization needs

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most is a hearty will.

So how does Jaffa deal with these statements? He does what Straussians too often do when the text they have brought to obedience school turns on them and bares its fangs: They find hidden meaning in the work ("secret writing") or simply stand it on its head. The author seems to be saying one thing but is actually saying another. Passages that appear to be straightforward are, instead, ironic, and only the explicator can read the coded message tucked between the lines. Machiavelli was really a moderate democrat. When Mark Antony says, "This was the noblest Roman of them all," he doesn't mean a word of it. In a similar circumvention of the obvious, Jaffa says Lincoln made these remarks only because such rhetoric was necessary to be elected in racist Illinois. When Joe Sobran took Lincoln's statements about race at face value, Jaffa reproved him for not taking history into account: "To understand this however requires some historical imagination—putting oneself in the place of someone in an earlier age—something Sobran seems unable to do."

For a scholar with Straussian contempt for history, Jaffa has his nerve. It is not that he fails to make use of historical facts while creating his fairy tale. In his work, facts are more numerous than the sands of the desert. He recites names, dates, and events as readily as a bright third grader recites the multiplication tables. But his imagination is by no means historical. It refuses to submit to history. It is predatory. It possesses the past, driving out its true spirit, reconfiguring its soul.

Almost anyone can imagine that Lincoln might adapt his campaign rhetoric to the prejudices of those whose vote he was seeking. However, no one with a submissive historical imagination could attribute to a mid-19th-century politician the kind of egalitarian sensibilities that Jaffa has attributed to Abraham Lincoln, particularly given Lincoln's comments on the subject of equality and his careful delineation of its limits. The real Lincoln, as opposed to Jaffa's 20th-century Lincoln, would never have been so moonstruck as to believe in the 1850's that he could actually implement such an anachronistic plan.

Also, if Lincoln lied about his racial views, can we not, through the exercise of our historical imaginations, conclude that he also lied about his opposition to slavery? After all, to run against Stephen Douglas, he had to oppose its extension. Douglas had authored the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which overrode the Missouri Compromise and allowed slavery to expand. Had Lincoln not taken the opposite position, he would have had no significant issue to differentiate himself from the popular incumbent senator.

Frederick Douglass—Abraham Lincoln's contemporary and, therefore, a man who, in evaluating the Great Emancipator, had no need for an historical imagination—said at the dedication of a memorial to the fallen president:

> He was preeminently the white man's President, entirely devoted to the welfare of white men. He was ready and willing at any time during the first years of his administration to deny, postpone, and sacrifice the rights of humanity in the colored people to promote the welfare of the white people of this country . . . He was ready to execute all the supposed guarantees of the United States Constitution in favor of the slave system anywhere inside the slave states. He was willing to pursue, recapture, and send back the fugitive slave to his master, and to suppress a slave rising for liberty, though his guilty master were already in arms against the Government.

Would it not be a proper exercise of the historical imagination to accept Douglass's evaluation and admit that Lincoln harbored the prejudices of 19th-century white men from Illinois? Why not grant him a special insight into the injustice of plantation life, but stop short of turning him into a civil-rights leader, marching on Selma? The answer from Claremont is likely to be charges of bigotry, racism, and neoconfederacy.

[Lincoln] was preeminently the white man's President, entirely devoted to the welfare of white men. He was ready and willing at any time during the first years of his administration to deny, postpone, and sacrifice the rights of humanity in the colored people to promote the welfare of the white people of this country . . .

—Frederick Douglass

Years after the last Jaffa-Bradford debate, I dropped by the Free Congress Foundation in Washington to see Mike Schwartz, whom I had taught at the University of Dallas and who was then working with Paul Weyrich. On our way to Mike's office, we came into a room where Harry Jaffa was seated on a sofa, talking to a young woman. As we passed through, I heard her ask him, "But why would Bradford say such a thing?"

"Because," Jaffa replied, "he believes in slavery."

Shocked, I stopped.

"Why Harry, I never heard him say anything like that."

"That's because you don't know him as well as I do," he said with a smile. "If you were to get him behind closed doors and give him a drink or two, he'd tell you the same thing."

Mike burst out laughing, remembering that I was Mel Bradford's closest friend and that I knew precisely what he thought about slavery, which he once called in print the worst tragedy in our nation's history.

Was Jaffa simply lying? I don't think so. Straussians don't have to lie. They have the power to transform the written word into the image of their heart's desire. I presume they can do the same thing with people—remove them from their context, explicate them, transform them into what they really ought to be, as opposed to what they merely are. Jaffa knew in his heart that Bradford believed in slavery because whatever Bradford did tell him (behind closed doors after a couple of drinks) was something like secret writing, a sly way of saying one thing and meaning another. In the Straussian paradigm, Bradford had to have a whip in his hand, so Jaffa placed it there, just as he placed the "I Have a Dream" speech in the head of Abraham Lincoln. ◇

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WMD Negotiations Must Be Based on Truth

An Interview With Dr. Hans Blix

by Alberto Carosa

If you thought that the end of the Cold War meant the end of the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons (WMDs), well, actually, it's not that easy. This was among the points underscored by Dr. Hans Blix, former chief U.N. weapons inspector and present chair of the independent Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC), during the Italian leg of his E.U. tour.

Blix has been heading the WMDC since its formation in 2003, and the purpose of his tour has been, in part, to promote the WMDC's new *Weapons of Terror* report, which all 14 members of the commission have endorsed. He came to Italy to present Pope Benedict and the Italian authorities with copies of the document. Speaking on Vatican Radio, Blix called the Vatican an ally in disarmament efforts, after having pointed out in a previous press briefing how inspired he was by the Pope's speech "In Truth, Peace," delivered on the World Day of Peace last January.

The report, representing two years' work by the commission, analyzes global threats and offers 60 recommendations to revitalize global cooperation on disarmament. For example, all governments are urged to accept the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty drafted ten years ago, requiring states that currently have nuclear weapons to reduce their arsenals and stop producing plutonium and highly enriched uranium for more nuclear weapons. The commission's ultimate goal is to see a ban on the possession and use of nuclear weapons resembling current bans on biological and chemical weapons. To that end, the report proposes a U.N. world summit on disarmament, nonproliferation, and curbing the use of weapons of mass destruction. The summit would also discuss the implementation of reforms to the United Nations' current disarmament apparatus.

Blix stresses that, while working through existing international treaties has some weaknesses, a policy based on unilateralism and military actions has failed and has been costly in terms of lives and resources.

Dr. Blix kindly agreed to the following brief interview.

You were at the Wednesday public audience with Benedict XVI: How was your encounter with him? What did he tell you?

I was very happy to meet the Holy Father and to hand him a copy of the report on how to tackle the question of weapons of mass destruction, which was recently finalized by myself and 13 other international experts. We are very anxious for it to be received and read not only by the governments or by their defense or disarmament departments but also by religious groups, non-governmental groups, think tanks, and media. The Pope is a great authority who stands for disarmament and told me that he supported its aim. I reminded the Pope of his early January message about peace through truth and that it was important to find out the truth. He said that the Catholic Church would like to help in promoting disarmament, just as we do. So one may say that we are their allies in this fight. After all, what is verification and inspection but an attempt to find the truth? As a matter of fact, international inspection is one means of searching for the truth, and we, as U.N. inspectors, came very close to the truth in Iraq, whereas national intelligence did not do so. And, indeed, if they had listened in 2003 to what we inspectors had to say, they would have come much closer to the truth than the intelligence agencies did, and maybe the war would have been prevented. So I think that, in the Church, the churches, and religious organizations, we have allies who are looking for peace, and I hope they will help to disseminate and study the report. Maybe they won't like everything in it, but they'll study it and give constructive ideas and constructive criticism.

The plain truth being that no WMDs were found in Iraq?

Exactly. After 700 inspections, we did not find any WMDs there, because there weren't any. Others believe they saw weapons where there were none. We know that the inspectors that I commanded gave a description of the reality that was much nearer the truth than the descriptions the CIA and British intelligence gave us. The result was a war, which meant tens of thousands of people killed and a wave of terrorism. The only positive result was that Saddam, a cruel dictator and butcher, disappeared, but, apart from that, the result was truly bad. And what was given as a main reason for the war—the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction—could politely be called a misunderstanding, although many believe that it was an outright lie.

Why do you think the support of the Church and religious groups is important to advance the cause of disarmament and the total banning of WMDs?

I was encouraged that the Catholic Church, its organizations, and especially its many peace organizations have pledged to examine the proposals and ideas we have come up with. Let's set the record straight: Without the mobilization of the grassroots and, therefore, favorable public opinion, it will never be possible for a total ban on WMDs to be enforced in earnest. The Pope, as head of the Catholic Church, is a leading moral authority who, together with the leaders and emissaries of other religious denominations, can do a lot to promote awareness and ultimately secure the victory of our cause.

How have your stint as director-general of the International

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Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna for 16 years and your time serving as head of UNMOVIC helped to shape your views on the WMD issue?

At the IAEA, I had a good deal of experience in the operation of safeguards control. Those standards were drafted in the 70's and gave very modest powers to the inspectors, which is why, in the 80's, we did not see what the Iraqis were up to. When we discovered in 1991 that they had been cheating, we worked out new types of verification schemes and rights for the inspectors, which were adopted by a great many countries, and the powers of the agency for conducting inspections are much greater today, so I am happy that this change has come about.

The just-war theory was also used by some to justify the war on Iraq. How does the WMD issue fit into this picture?

I think there were probably many reasons on the U.S. side for the war, but the only one for which they would get the authorization from the U.S. Congress was the WMDs—particularly the allegation that there was a nuclear program. (They could not say that Saddam had nuclear weapons.) I think there were other motives—to try to install democracy there was probably one of them, but they were also about to move their troops from Saudi Arabia, where they were not so welcome. The United States also felt the need to ensure that the oil sources and the transportation of oil from the Gulf would not be disturbed. Securing that was one reason behind the war. Then there was the feeling that Saddam, a little dictator in the corner, was defying the United States, the strongest military power in the world. So there were many reasons, and the alleged presence of WMDs was only one.

In your press briefing, you spoke about stagnation in the negotiating process for WMDs to be phased out once and for all. What are the major factors hindering this process?

Since the end of the Cold War, there had been a gradual stagnation in the efforts of global disarmament, and the situation today is miserable. We still have 27,000 nuclear warheads in the world, and nuclear-weapons states are not taking serious steps to exit the nuclear-weapons age. We think that, now that the Cold War is over, it should be easier. It will not happen overnight, but we should take the chance, since we don't see the will to do that. We see a dissatisfaction among non-nuclear-weapons states who say that, since we have disarmed, since we have promised we'll respect this without any time limit, we would like to see the nuclear-weapons states do the same.

Your report tends to downplay the possibility that terrorists may resort to so-called dirty bombs, because of the risk of being killed while accomplishing their action. What about Islamic suicide bombers?

Our view in the commission is that all nuclear weapons are dangerous, regardless of whose hands they are in. They'd be more deadly in reckless hands, but they are dangerous everywhere. You can imagine that, in Pakistan, for instance, if you had a different regime, if President Musharraf somehow were thrown out and replaced by a more fundamentalist regime, I think that the world, the United States and others, would be much more worried about this. All such weapons *per se* are dangerous.

You also spoke about space militarization, and the fact that there is almost no debate on such a similarly dangerous issue. What are the problems here?

We have armies of engineers who are working to improve our communications systems and mobile phones, and another army of engineers is working to see how we can destroy the satellites of other countries. And if it were to happen, if we were to have a lot of war in space, with a lot of debris, then the internet and all the things that we are accustomed to today, which have become fundamentally and vitally important in the world, might be destroyed. And people are not aware of it. Kofi Annan recently said that the world is "sleepwalking" into a very much more armed world and that we need to wake up and come to global agreements. In other words, although outer space has not yet been specifically weaponized, it is already militarized, and we must absolutely keep any WMDs from being stationed up there. We must never forget that the risk is also there for a missile to be launched by mistake.

After 700 inspections, we did not find any WMDs there, because there weren't any. Others believe they saw weapons where there were none.

What is your brief assessment of the situation in Iraq?

It is really bad, miserable. I can only hope that the Iraqi government will gradually be able to have more control. I think that, for the Iraqi government to have more control, they must show they are not so dependent on the United States, because public opinion there is very much against a continued U.S. presence. I think the United States could help by saying that we will only be here to try to help you stabilize, but we are determined that we will leave, and we do not want to have any bases in Iraq.

And what about Iran?

I think that there is, above all, time. There is no rush in the case of Iran, no reason to say that you must answer within two weeks. The CIA has estimated that Iran could have nuclear weapons maybe in five or ten years, so there is no reason to issue ultimatums; they should talk.

Your final appeal?

We hope now that governments, think tanks, media, and NGOs will study the proposals we have spent several years putting together. These are experts from around the world who have come forward with concrete proposals, and I think it provides very important information for those who would like to see greater disarmament. ◁

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China, Russia, and NGOs

Resisting the Reform Revolution

by Jeremy Whitcombe

Russia's January 2006 law limiting the operation of NGOs, especially those with foreign funding, has earned her pariah status. What Western audiences rarely hear is that Russia has good reasons to crack down on some NGOs.

A network of high-profile, internationally funded NGOs (specifically, the Russian Privatization Center and its offshoots) were instrumental in the privatization fraud that precipitated Russia's 1992-96 economic crash, in which the GDP loss to Russia (40 percent) was the economic equivalent of California, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and New York seceding from the Union within a five-year period. International donors, including the United States Agency for International Development, used this network to contribute to First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais' political activities in the 1990's.

Last year's legislation "Amending Some Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation" requires public associations to register with the Russian government. NGOs must report their activities and allow yearly financial audits. The standards for registration and reporting are higher for foreign NGOs—and they are not permitted in "closed" territories, such as Chechnya. The bill protects the right of foreign citizens to join NGOs and forbids discrimination based on membership. It also bars the state from meddling in public groups, as long as they do not help terrorists, arouse ethnic hatred, or offend public decency.

In some ways, the text of the Russian NGO law is less strict than U.S. laws governing NGO registration. (Russia does not bar exclusively religious or scientific research-based groups.) But to understand how the law will be implemented, it is necessary to understand what motivated it.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, some Westerners and Russians saw the chance to form a "civil society" in Russia—but they needed to act quickly, while domestic government institutions were malleable. Hundreds of millions of dollars in aid for this was managed by the Harvard Institute for International Development. HIID worked closely with Chubais, who, along with a few cronies, effectively controlled how most of this money was spent in Russia.

Through their flagship NGO, the Russia Privatization Center, Chubais and Harvard team members set up a network of NGOs throughout Russia that would bankroll local politicians who supported Chubais. Aid money was siphoned off for private business interests. This type of pseudo-NGO was used by many rich Russians to launder money or evade taxes. (Yuri Mamchur, a Seattle-based Russia analyst, estimates that less than one percent of the nearly 500,000 Russian NGOs do not serve a criminal purpose.)

Chubais used his aid-fueled political clout to promote the "shock therapy" privatization program advanced by Harvard professor Jeffrey Sachs. This program was never popular; it was pushed through by presidential decrees—which only Chubais had the power to approve, barring direct interference from then-President Boris Yeltsin. The Duma and other legal institutions were completely sidelined. Politicized aid spending reinforced a system of clannish patronism, to the point where functioning government institutions were being circumvented and undermined.

Russia is now on her way to economic recovery and is beginning to deal with the corruption problems that were exacerbated by foreign aid. But the fiasco raised serious concerns in Russia about what, exactly, foreign governments and private institutions were trying to accomplish. Russian-government officials saw foreign intervention as a deliberate attempt to weaken their power and Russian national integrity.

High-level officials in China have always been skeptical of the "shock therapy" method of reforming the Russian economy: They thought the sudden devolution of economic power from the central government was foolish. The events of the 1990's confirmed their suspicions. Beijing thinks that low-level NGO staff members have a genuine desire to help the Chinese people but distrusts some of the higher-ups' intentions. And China's fears have only been heightened by American involvement in regime change in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

U.S. involvement in the "color revolutions" of Central Asia and Eastern Europe is interpreted by Russia and China as a direct threat to their sovereignty. These "revolutions" undermine governments that have traditional ties to Russia and China, and the resulting power vacuum is often filled by organized crime. The fallout has meant chaos along Russian and Chinese borders.

The Chinese government claims that American NGOs, such as the International Republican Institute (affiliated with the Republican Party), the National Democratic Institute (affiliated with the Democratic Party), Freedom House, and the Open Society Institute (George Soros), gave media and material support to the "color revolutions." Given that the boards of these NGOs comprise former U.S. secretaries of state, current U.S. politicians, and venture capitalists, the Chinese view their activities with suspicion.

Western involvement in color revolutions has distinctive hallmarks. A small group of young, English-speaking "reformers" with free-market sympathies organize meetings for adolescents. The youngsters are provided with flashy advertising and a "manifesto" that promotes nonviolent revolution. Media reports of discrimination exacerbate ethnic divisions within these countries. The reformers have a cadre of consultants and academics in the West that can explain their cause effectively. Usually, the crisis is precipitated by an unfavorable result in

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rigged elections, where Western-funded exit polls provide the key evidence for fraud. After the leader of the reformers is instated, Western governments hail the success of "the people" or a "democratic dream."

The three color revolutions in the Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia have not produced governments that are significantly more "democratic" or less corrupt than the preceding ones. Still, activists associated with a U.S.-based website are pushing for a "denim" revolution in Belarus. The U.S. government and its European allies are giving the activists their support.

What makes the Russians and the Chinese nervous is that the color revolutions always seem to produce the same result: increased Western influence in government, lucrative investment deals for Western-aligned elites, and strained ties with Russia and China.

It will be easier for the Chinese government to deal with "subversive" NGOs than it was for the Russians, because elites in China do not yet rely on NGOs as part of their power structure, and the Chinese people still see Beijing as their main source of support. Beijing's offensive will squeeze foreign funding and talent out of the Chinese NGO community through targeted registration, auditing, and reporting requirements. Organizations with foreign-government funding will eventually be ruled out altogether.

Right now, Beijing's NGO laws have many legal loopholes. In the future, it will be clearer what NGOs need to do to register, and these laws will be enforced. The new registration process will be arduous, and NGOs will still require sponsorship from a government agency. The difficulty in finding government sponsors will provide an advantage to home-grown NGOs. Beijing will use the lag time to establish government-friendly institutions to meet the needs it deems worthy. In fact, this is already happening as government-organized NGOs (GONGOs) are becoming more prominent throughout China.

The Beijing government will not be rash; it will ensure that foreign businesses, and its tax base, will not suffer under any new NGO laws. However, NGOs that have exploited loopholes to register as corporations, as well as U.S. businesses that have interfered in politics, may be affected. Beijing will present a comprehensive legal framework for "fairly and efficiently" dealing with NGOs that will be superficially convincing.

Beijing will use the Chinese media to encourage the public to be skeptical about NGOs. The ground for this has already been laid with the embezzlement scandals surrounding the China Youth Development Foundation and its foreign-/private-funded offshoot Project Hope. The government will use the excuse of fighting fraud to implement restrictive measures on foreign funding.

Beijing will impose limitations on well-known subversion techniques. For instance, there will be a tightening of public-decency regulations (no sexually explicit Rolling Stones songs, *à la* Howard Perlmutter and social-destabilization techniques). "Hate-speech" legislation will be passed, with the aim of silencing people who foment ethnic tensions in the border provinces. "Minority-rights" promoters will lose media platforms.

The Russians and, in the future, the Chinese will act to protect their personal power and national integrity in the face of what they see as American aggression. The American public should consider the fallout from courting the hostility of Russia and China. We are already spread very thin in the "War on Terror"; can we afford to alienate everyone? ©

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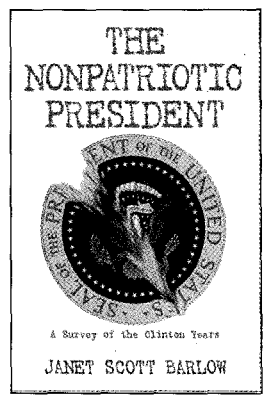
—From the Introduction by William Murchison of the *Dallas Morning News*



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Carrying the Fire

by Jack Trotter

"Our civilization is founded on the shambles, and every individual existence goes out in a lonely spasm of helpless agony."

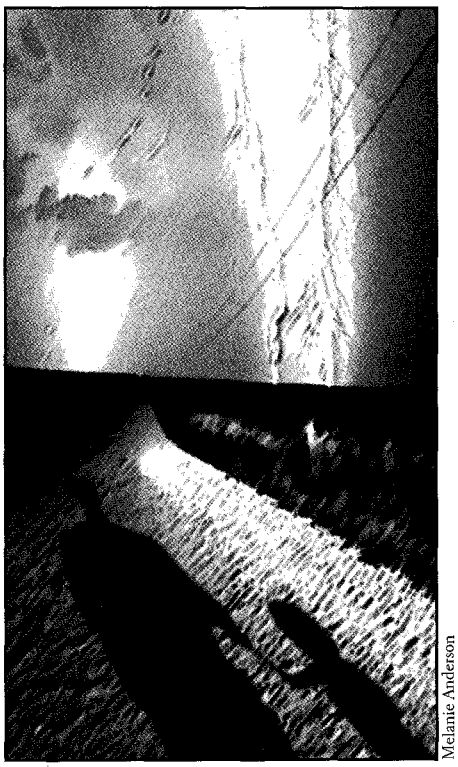
—William James

The Road
by Cormac McCarthy
New York: Alfred A. Knopf;
256 pp., $24.00

◆

In one of his rare interviews several years back, Cormac McCarthy suggested that writers who are not preoccupied with death are simply "not serious." Chaucer might have objected, of course, not to mention Cervantes, Austen, or Swift. But, by his own standard, McCarthy's new novel, *The Road*, is about as serious as they come. Death, especially violent death, has always been his métier. Now he offers his readers a novel in which death seems to have utterly routed the opposition and taken no prisoners: a gruesome yet mesmerizing vision of a world—our world—given over to death in the guise of what appears to be nuclear winter, a world of stupefying cold and drifting clouds of smoke and ash.

Dozens of novels dealing with the theme of nuclear holocaust have been written over the last half-century. None with which I am familiar comes even remotely close to the gut-wrenching realism of *The Road*. Much of the novel's power depends on its stylistic austerity, its undeviating focus on the desperate plight of its two central characters: a nameless father and son, traveling south on foot out of the devastation and horror of unnamed northern parts, through mountains where forest fires still burn, across the coastal plain to the sea, in the dim hope that there they might find warmth and some hope of survival. Anything that might distract our attention from this terrifying pilgrimage and the father's grim determination to keep his son alive is stripped away. No attempt is made to account for the political events that precipitated this seemingly planetary holocaust. The father remembers only a "long shear of light and then a series of low concussions." Some years, perhaps a decade, have passed. Food supplies have been exhausted, and "murder is everywhere upon the land." Cannibal "blood cults" roam the highways, and "the cities [are] held by cores of blackened looters . . . carrying charred and anonymous tins of food in nylon nets like shoppers in the commissaries of hell." While it is possible that McCarthy conceived this novel as a prophetic warning against the environmental horrors that an all-out (or even limited) nuclear war might bring, it seems to me unlikely that this was his primary concern. On the contrary, the destruction of the earth and of human civilization is portrayed here as something fated, as the inevitable and long-prepared outcome of the violence that inheres not only in the hearts of men but in the very nature of things.



Melanie Anderson

Yet, in spite of (or, perhaps, in part, because of) this bleak fatality, *The Road* is achingly tender in its depiction of the sacrificial love of the father for his only son. In fact, the father (sometimes referred to simply as "the man") is already dying, his lungs poisoned with toxins, his chronic cough growing more ominous with every mile that they journey. It would be easier for him to find a secluded place to die in peace, but he is driven by a love that is greater than his own longing for death to stay alive for the sake of the boy: "He knew only that the child was his warrant. He said: If he is not the word of God God never spoke." Among the pitiful heap of belongings that the two haul along the road in an old grocery cart with a broken wheel is a .45 pistol with two rounds remaining in its chamber: one for the boy, should they fall into the hands of the cannibals, and another for himself. As the journey unfolds, the man comes increasingly to doubt whether he will be capable, when and if the moment should arise, of killing his own offspring. He constantly worries, too, about the effect on the boy's mind of the grisly scenes that they witness along the road. "What you

Jack Trotter writes from Charleston, South Carolina.

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put in your head," he frequently warns his son, "is there forever." One day, they round a bend in the road to find a tableau of "Figures half mired in the blacktop, clutching themselves, mouths howling," figures of people caught in a firestorm that swept the road before they could take cover. The son anticipates his father's warning and reassures him that it's "okay," because "They're already there" and will "still be there" whether he averts his eyes or not.

This world of howling nightmares is the only world the boy knows, for he was born after the conflagration. Much of the novel's ironic pathos derives from this essential difference between father and son. The man tells his stories of the world as it once was, in part to reassure the boy that things were not always so hideous, so devoid of comfort and hope. But the son grows more skeptical with each passing day. One night, when they have found temporary refuge in an underground shelter, the father gazes at the sleeping boy and understands

> for the first time that to the boy he was himself an alien. A being from a planet that no longer existed. The tales of which were suspect. He could not construct for the child's pleasure the world he'd lost without constructing the loss as well and he thought perhaps the child had known this better than he.

To the boy, his father's tales seem like fictions spun out of memories that, for the man himself, grow more tenuous in the very telling.

One of the most disturbing themes of *The Road* is this inexorable diminishing of the father's memory of the past and, with it, the very possibility of enduring meaning:

> The world shrinking down about a raw core of parsible entities. The names of things slowly following those things into oblivion. Colors. The names of birds. Things to eat. Finally the names of things one believed to be true.

In the beginning, as the Genesis account informs us, Adam was privileged with the singular task of naming the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. According to Midrashic tradition, Adam, in the bestowing of names, was able to do what even the angels could not, and was thus a participant in the very act of creation, of bringing creation to its fruition by granting it individuality. In *The Road*, this process is reversed. The father, a latter-day Adam, is stunned to discover how fragile is the world that he once took for granted. The beasts of the field, the birds, even the fish have all but disappeared—and, with them, their names and their very reality. But in the midst of this increasingly meaningless world, he clings to his primordial (and sacred) role of father and protector. "So be it," he thinks. "Evoke the forms. Where you've nothing else construct ceremonies out of the air and breathe upon them."

McCarthy has frequently been criticized over the years for the insignificant role that women play in his novels. It is certainly the case that his fictional worlds are almost exclusively masculine, and that the few women who do appear there are not especially memorable. Whether this may be justly considered a major flaw in his work, I will leave to others to decide. In *The Road*, there is only one, very brief, physical encounter with a woman. But there is another, more significant female presence: the father's haunted and bitter memory of his dead wife (and mother of his son). In a series of potent flashbacks, we learn that she died, on the day before their journey began, by her own hand. When she announces her intention, the man begs her to reconsider. But she is adamant in her assertion that hers is the only morally justifiable choice:

> It's the right thing to do. . . . Sooner or later, they will catch us and they will kill us. They will rape me. They'll rape him. They are going to rape us and kill us and eat us and you won't face it. You'd rather wait for it to happen.

He has no answer to this, other than a promise never to abandon her. The exchange which follows is revealing:

> I don't care. It's meaningless. You can think of me as a faithless slut if you like. I've taken a new lover. He can give me what you cannot.
>
> Death is not a lover.
>
> Oh, yes, he is.

It is strongly suggested that the father considers her suicide to have been a betrayal of her duty to himself and the boy. When the deed is done (with a razor-sharp flake of obsidian), we learn that "She was gone and the coldness of it was her final gift." Of course, it is the father's intention to make a similar exit (with the rounds in his .45), should the necessity arise. But, in the end, this is not the choice he makes, and it is hard to avoid the conclusion that his is the morally superior path. In an oblique way, this may be McCarthy's response to his critics. The dead wife's character is a decidedly formidable one; she is far from insignificant, nor is she a sentimental caricature or an adolescent fantasy (the usual charges against McCarthy's fictional women). However, it is unlikely that the critics will be appeased. On the contrary, many will be infuriated by what might appear to be, or might be construed as, a misogynistic parable on the moral fecklessness of women.

Whatever conclusions one might draw from this about McCarthy's position in the sex wars, it is clearly not so much the father as the son who is the moral heart of the novel. In spite of all the numbing horrors that they have witnessed, his conscience remains as tender as an open wound. The most touching scenes in *The Road* are the frequent exchanges in which the boy implores his father for reassurance that they are "the good guys," or that they must keep moving, in spite of the sometimes overwhelming urge to give up, because it is their duty to "carry the fire." For the most part, the father is aware that, to remain the "good guys," they must adhere to certain clear moral guidelines. They must not kill, save in self-defense; they must not steal; they must not eat of human flesh, even if the alternative is to starve. All of these precepts, the father keeps, though sometimes he must make hard decisions that trouble the son. On one occasion only does he appear to cross the line. When their grocery cart, containing all that remains of their food supply, is stolen, they track down the thief and confront him in the middle of the road. In retaliation (and to ensure that he will no longer threaten them), the father forces the man to strip naked and then releases him. The thief begs for mercy, but the father is unrelenting. They leave him exposed to the elements, resigning him to an almost-certain death. The son is visibly distraught and will not be comforted until the father agrees to return the thief's clothes, but their efforts are fruitless. The man has disappeared. The father seems to

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recognize that his son's moral instincts have proved more reliable than his own (hardened, as they are, by the struggle to survive), and, as the novel nears its conclusion, he nourishes a faith that there is some providence at work in their lives (though he calls it "luck"), that the boy is destined somehow to "carry the flame" into some "unimaginable future."

Finally, I must say something more about McCarthy's stylistic accomplishment in *The Road*. Dedicated readers of his novels often fall into two opposed camps. One, with almost cultlike devotion, argues that McCarthy's reputation will endure primarily on the basis of early books such as *Child of God* (1974) and *Blood Meridian* (1985). The other prefers the lighter touch, heightened lyricism, and more frequent humor of the later novels, beginning especially with the first of the Border Trilogy, *All the Pretty Horses* (1992). I confess that I am inclined to agree with the partisans of the later novels, but I would also suggest that the contrast between the early and later work has been exaggerated. There is much to admire in the early novels, but they do, at times, lapse into what can only be described as an overwrought gothicism. Consider, for example, the following passage taken from a carnival scene in *Child of God*:

> And you could see among the faces a young girl with candyapple on her lips and her eyes wide. Her hair smelled of soap, womanchild from beyond the years, rapt beneath the sulphur glow and pitchlight of some medieval fun fair. A lean skylong candle skewered the black pools in her eyes. Her fingers clutched. In the flood of this breaking brimstone galaxy she saw the man with the bears watching her.

The passage begins nicely enough, and one admires the "lean skylong candle," but why spoil the effect with the portentous "womanchild from beyond the years" (what does it mean?), the "skewered" black eyes, or the almost laughable "breaking brimstone galaxy"? In his more recent productions, McCarthy has wisely pruned such excesses from his prose, relying more heavily on taut, razor-sharp dialogue and less frequent but more effective description. Consider the following passage from *The Road*:

> He walked out in the gray light and stood and he saw for a brief moment the absolute truth of the world. The cold relentless circling of the intestate earth. Darkness implacable. The blind dogs of the sun in their running.

To be sure, this verges on the portentous—but stops just short of that. What is the difference? It is difficult to say, except that there is no straining for effect here, and that what would otherwise come across as somewhat clichéd is redeemed by the perfect Shakespearean diction of "the intestate earth" and those "blind dogs of the sun in their running."

Despite the almost nihilistic pessimism evident in passages like this one, *The Road* is probably McCarthy's most hopeful novel to date. For the first time, to my knowledge, he is suggesting that there is a redemptive power in self-sacrificing human love that transcends the futility of lives lived out in the face of an "implacable" darkness. This hope, all the more impressively achieved against the background of global annihilation, is surely just a step away from the Christian affirmation of the redeeming power of the Cross.

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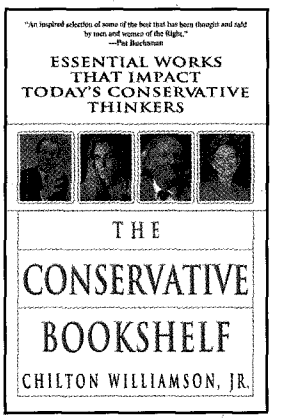
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Theseus in the Moral Maze

by Derek Turner

Gentle Regrets: Thoughts From a Life
by Roger Scruton
London: Continuum; 248 pp., $19.95

◆

Roger Scruton has had a long and paradoxical career as a kind of intellectual outlaw—a sage of the badlands that hem in the p.c. pale. Aesthete, philosopher, author, journalist, lecturer, broadcaster, farmer, fox hunter, even musician—he has been all of these things, an often solitary small-*c* conservative voice in milieux dominated by the forces of institutionalized ignorance. When all others are nodding in ovine agreement over some postmodern cliché, Scruton's quietly insistent voice can often be heard in the deafening silence—a Theseus at large in the *Moral Maze*.

Scruton writes in his Preface, "My life has enabled me to find comfort in uncomfortable truths." It is these unwelcome messages, rather than any personal or intellectual shortcomings, that have for so long caused him simultaneously to be marginalized and grudgingly respected. He has long had a "sense of being an outsider, obscurely redeemed by the crime that condemned me." In his maturity (he is 62), he has finally emerged as an insider's outsider—the house "fascist" or "Tory" whom the politically correct love to hate but cannot ignore, the unspeakable articulator of what they would prefer to have left unsaid—an enemy they nevertheless need, not least so that they can define themselves.

In this largely autobiographical collection of essays (mixed in with some less easily categorizable material), Professor Scruton recounts a history of early rebellion: reading Bunyan, Rilke, and Kafka while still in his early teens; being expelled from grammar school for staging a Samuel Beckett "happening" in the school hall, which involved setting a piano on fire and reading from Beckett while a partly clad girl put out the flames. This later became a "rebellion against rebellion"—a conversion completed by witnessing the activities of the *soixante-huitards* as they rampaged Apache-like across Paris, on their long march to becoming academic deconstructionists and Red-Green members of the European Parliament. Scruton's character formation was not so much a rite of passage as a *right*-of-passage. He is a man born in the wrong era, as he jocularly admits on his website:

> Why is he?—His own diligent researches have produced no definitive answer to this question. Some kind of mistake was made, however, over the timing of his birth. The question is, whose?

The youthful Scruton "devoted to shoring up ruins the same passionate conviction that my contemporaries employed in creating them," in a search for "an original path to conformity." He had become "obsessed with the idea of a knowledge beyond science, beyond calculation, beyond our attempts to gain mastery over the future." He recalls how "A sadness grew in me, a sense that something was wrong in the world . . . sadness looked out at me from art and literature, like the pitying face of a painted saint." He deplored that "Science, progress and money had prevented people from observing this." He was drawn to Spengler and other prophets of cataclysm and became a "barbarian let loose in a library." With a friend, he traveled to Greece to wander the shattered classic landscapes, asking rhetorically of the storied silence, "*Schöne Welt, wo bist du?*" He had "spectacles on his nose, and autumn in his heart." Scruton had developed an acute *Weltschmerz* and was well on his way to the highly self-conscious and unusually articulate conservatism that has become his stock-in-trade. He has since come to hold a less enthusiastic view of Spengler's work (although he still admires the German's attempt to synthesize philosophy, history, and art), but trace elements of this fundamental despair mark all his writings.

Scruton is in love with loss for loss's sake—for instance, he is captivated by the idea (born of discovering his grandfather's real surname) that he may be partly of German-Jewish ancestry and a descendant thereby of a lost cerebral culture. This Gothic sensibility is one that will be instinctively familiar to many readers of *Chronicles*; it is at once conservatism's most appealing characteristic and its chief weakness—for how many will follow a repining trumpet any more than an uncertain one?

Another formative influence was *Four Quartets*, a "rebuke to our boyishness," which "engaged a shaping influence on my thinking that has been matched only by Wittgenstein, Kant and Wagner." In his treatment of T.S. Eliot's work, Scruton gives vent to a rare burst of optimism. "*Four Quartets* told me that our culture contains the seeds of its own renewal, that it is a source of meaning and value and that, even at the eleventh hour, it can be received and passed on." Scruton's latest foray into personal reminiscence has probably been motivated by the feeling expressed in "Burnt Norton" that "Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future, / And time future contained in time past." By probing the roots of his name and nature, Scruton is trying to peer into a gloomed and crepuscular future.

The tone of the book is summed up by its title. While Scruton has lost none of his cold fire, this is an accepting book, its faint wistfulness tinged with a certain justifiable complacency. His life is portrayed as a series of mostly creditable, sepia-tinted vignettes, although, of course, all recollections contain hints of unlived adventures, *à la* Eliot: "Footfalls echo in the memory / Down the passage which we did not take / Towards the door we never opened / Into the rose-garden."

Through reading Burke's *Essay on the Sublime and the Beautiful* and Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Scruton realized the connections between aesthetics, philosophy, and politics: "[A]esthetic judgement lays a claim upon the world . . . it issues from a deep social imperative." He also understood suddenly, with an unpleasant shock, why left-wing ideologies tend to be so aggressive:

> People reason collectively towards a common goal only in times of emergency . . . any attempt to organize society according to this kind of rationality would involve . . . the declaration of war against some real or imagined enemy.

Through such innumerable influences, Scruton grew to despise modernity, with its "denial of community, home and settlement," which has made of the Western world a kind of existential desert. He saw that Westerners had become atomized individuals, divorced from their own natures, from their families, their cities or villages, their countries, and their whole crumbling civilization.

Despite being profoundly out of sympathy with his times, and against often bit-

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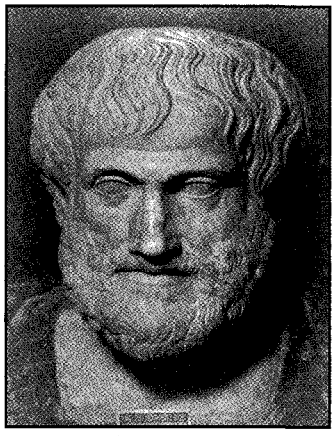
ter opposition, Scruton has had a distinguished academic career. He studied at Jesus College in Cambridge, receiving a B.A. in moral sciences in 1965, his M.A. in 1967, and his D.Phil. in philosophy, with a thesis on aesthetics, in 1972. He was called to the bar in 1978. From 1969 to 1971, he was a research fellow at Peterhouse. From 1971 to 1992, he was successively lecturer, reader, and professor of aesthetics at Birkbeck College in London. From 1992 to 1995, he was a professor of philosophy at Boston University. (Scruton is presently a visiting professor at the Institute of Psychological Sciences in Arlington, Virginia.)

Impressive though these achievements may be, Scruton's writings and his political activism are what distinguish him within the hostile ambience of modern Britain. He has written around 30 books, on subjects ranging from *The Aesthetics Of Architecture* (1979) and *Spinoza* (1987) to *Animal Rights and Wrongs* (1996) and *The Meaning Of Conservatism* (1980), plus five works of fiction and two operas. Several of these are already regarded as classics, and it seems likely that time will cement their reputation.

In 1974, in an attempt to inject ideas into an intellectually comatose party, he cofounded the Conservative Philosophy Group with Hugh Fraser, then a Conservative MP and husband of Lady Antonia Fraser (who is now, ironically, Mrs. Harold Pinter). The CPG carried on for some 20 years, attracting speakers of the caliber of Friedrich Hayek, but Scruton has to admit that "we had little influence on the high command of the Party, and none whatsoever on the academic world." He recounts a remarkable speech by Harold Macmillan in 1983, which petered out: "To remember . . . to remember . . . I have forgotten what I wanted to say"—which last words, Scruton says, not unkindly, "capture the essence of Conservative (with a capital C) philosophy."

He is much more famous (or notorious) for having been the founding editor of the *Salisbury Review*, which he edited from 1982 to 2001. (He is still on the magazine's advisory board.) The *Review* was named after Lord Salisbury (1830-1903), thrice prime minister and staunch Tory, whose "great merit as a Prime Minister," as he told me in a 1995 *Right Now!* interview, "is that you don't know who he is—that the country was maintained in equilibrium for 20 years by his saving presence without anyone preserving the slightest memory of it." With such an example, he was initially attracted to Margaret Thatcher, but the relationship between the Salisbury Group and the Iron Lady was always rather ambiguous. Early on, Scruton could see that free-market ideals did not necessarily sit easily with the more visceral, romantic, nationalistic Toryism he favored, and he disliked the compromises that politicians always feel they have to make.

The *Review* swiftly gained notoriety, with articles calling for the repatriation of immigrants and supporting Ray Honeyford, the gentle Bradford schoolmaster who advocated that Muslim pupils should integrate with their non-Muslim schoolfellows. In 1985, the British Association for the Advancement of Science branded the *Review* guilty of "scientific racism," which inverse accolade secured the *Review*'s reputation. His 1986 book, *Thinkers of the New Left*, so outraged the crusaders for "liberalism" and "tolerance" that they successfully pressured his publisher at that time not to publish more of his works. As a result, Scruton founded the eclectic Claridge Press, to ensure that those who could not have their books published by larger publishing firms might always have an outlet. (In 2004, Claridge was sold to Continuum, the



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publisher of the present book.)

It was not just British dissidents who read the *Review*. Arguably, its greatest impact was in Eastern Europe, in the days before the Iron Curtain finally rusted away. For years, Scruton and a small band of collaborators visited isolated intellectuals in Prague and elsewhere and smuggled forbidden publications and classic texts to dissident circles, at considerable risk to themselves. Scruton has mixed feelings about the results of the opening up of Eastern Europe: He looks back longingly at the heady days of dangerous dissent among the musty remains of the old Europe, which, in some ways, paradoxically survived longer in the isolated East than in the free West. "That world has vanished. Communism preserved it as a dream; capitalism processed and packaged its remaining fragments." That balanced pronouncement encapsulates Scruton's intellectual and emotional distance from the economic reductionists of left and right who have now captured (temporarily, one hopes) the major political parties in all Western countries.

Much of *Gentle Regrets* is taken up with its author's gradually growing religiosity. Like many thoughtful people, Scruton spent years "roaming in search of beauty," which led him ineluctably into churches. Driven by his compulsion to find meaning in everything and the knowledge that societies (especially those, such as England, which have a "national church") simply cannot function without an irrational spiritual foundation, his aesthetic tourism morphed into an ever-closer engagement with Christianity. He is now a regular attendee (and keyboardist) at High Anglican services. But there is something essentially paradoxical about this newfound (or rediscovered) allegiance. Scruton's awareness of the intellectual challenges of science condemns him to view religion mostly from outside, as if he were an anthropologist looking down from an empyrean height on some quaint cultish practice, or an entomologist admiring a beetle pinned to a board. Like Eliot, he is "a believer in belief" rather than a true believer. Like other clever conservatives, Scruton has arrived at his religious views progressively and rationally rather than emotionally, as a combined recognition of religion's social utility and a weakness for resonant prose and music. His view is diametrically opposed to that of Sir Thomas Browne's famous "Methinks there be not enough mysteries in religion for an active faith."

There is one area of politics that the author has always somewhat overlooked, much to our detriment. Despite the accusations of "racism" instanced above, it is often said that Scruton has never ascribed sufficient importance to race as a factor in human affairs, and certainly, for many years, such concerns went almost unaddressed in the *Salisbury Review* (although that is no longer the case). Nor has he ever treated this subject at book-length. Yet his delicate antennae are always twitching, sniffing the winds, acknowledging a changing world: He devoted a whole book, *The West and the Rest* (2002), to the challenge of Islamic terrorism. In *Gentle Regrets*, he looks directly, if glancingly, into the hate-flecked brown eyes of the Muslims, in the chapter on "Regaining My Religion":

> The Muslims come to us from the demographic infernos of North Africa and Pakistan, like Aeneas from the burning ruins of Troy, each with an old man on his shoulders, a child at his feet and his hands full of strange gods . . . They show us what we *really* stand to lose, if we hold nothing sacred.

In the September 2006 issue of the *New Criterion*, in an article on Enoch Powell, he returned to the theme:

> The fact is that the people of Europe are losing their homelands, and therefore losing their place in the world. I don't envisage the Tiber one day foaming with much blood, nor do I see it blushing as the voice of the muezzin sounds from the former cathedral of St. Peter. But the city through which the Tiber flows will one day cease to be Italian, and all the expectations of its former residents, whether political, social, cultural, or personal, will suffer a violent upheaval, with results every bit as interesting as those that Powell prophesied.

In *Four Quartets*, Eliot reflected ruefully that "human kind cannot bear very much reality." Scruton is one of the exceptions to this rule; he is a one-man intellectual army, an antidote to (almost all of) our present discontents.

Derek Turner is the editor of the Quarterly Review, *published in London.*

"Nothin' Could Be Finah Than to Be in Carolina"

by Clyde Wilson

Memory's Keep
by James Everett Kibler
Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co.; 221 pp., $22.00

◆

A first-rate scholar is as rare as, or rarer than, a first-rate creative writer. Believe me, having hung out with professors for 45 years, I know whereof I speak. When a first-rate scholar is also a creative artist of merit, you have a national treasure, a real live example of what has become scarcer and scarcer—a man of letters.

James Kibler long ago showed his mettle as a literary scholar. With his novel *Memory's Keep*, he has five creative works to his credit: two novels, a book of stories, a book of poetry—*Poems From Scorched Earth*—and a beautiful historical memoir, *Our Fathers' Fields*. In choosing his literary territory, Kibler has followed Sherwood Anderson's providential advice to Faulkner: Concentrate on your own little postage stamp of land. Kibler's is in Upcountry South Carolina (*Upcountry* being a tradition-laden three-centuries-old term which now, unfortunately, our foreign-owned local media have replaced with *the Upstate*.)

Daringly, in *Memory's Keep*, the author has taken up the human dimension of a major but little-known demographic fact of our time—the return of numerous black Americans, including many educated and prosperous folks, from the alien North to their Southern roots. *Memory's Keep* begins with the friendship of the young white farmer Trig Tinsley and the elderly black farmer Mister Pink. But the story is primarily about Mister Pink's children and grandchildren in their Northern diaspora and how, with the aid of memory and of Trig Tinsley, they begin to discover their healthy roots in the land.

Kibler has drawn a moving and a true portrait of people who once were lost but now are found. This signifies one group's return to its native place as well as the universal need to return to what is natural and close to the earth. Kibler is consciously in the Southern Agrarian tradi-

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tion and knows his patch and its people not only as they appear today but in historical, cultural, and ecological depth. If his muse does not desert him, his Clay Bank County, South Carolina, promises to become richly peopled and meaningful in the way of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha and Wendell Berry's Port William.

Clyde Wilson is Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus of the University of South Carolina.

Founders, Keepers

by James O. Tate

Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different
by Gordon S. Wood
New York: The Penguin Press;
321 pp., $25.95

◆

Professor of history at Brown University, author of *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787*, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, *The American Revolution: A History*, and *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, Gordon S. Wood is in a unique position to undertake an account of those Founding Fathers from whom we must feel increasingly estranged. Intellectual, or perhaps we should say ideological, revolutions stand between us and them. Wood points to the muckraking efforts by John Back McMaster in 1898, by Sydney George Fisher in 1897 and 1912, and, above all, by Charles A. Beard, whose *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, published in 1913, Wood calls "the most influential history book ever written in America." Since then, of course, there have been further revolutions in the writing of history and in the making of it, as the lives of the Founding Fathers recede in time and their images occult themselves, and as the meaning of the Constitution has been distorted again and again.

There can be no question but that we need to recover a vital connection to the spirit of the Founding Fathers: By identifying that spirit, Wood has made an imposing contribution not only to American history but to the regeneration of the national mythology. But Wood gives us no easy answers: He does not indicate that every little neocon can channel Alexander Hamilton. Much that we have heard lately about Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, and Hamilton has been too tilted toward our contemporary values and to obvious political logrolling to be of much use or credibility. Rarely does Wood nod in the direction of political correctness, for his point about the difference of the Founding Fathers is their difference from us. In this sense, the "vital connection" is a dead end. When they went, they slammed the door behind them, for never again could such men rise to the challenges they surmounted. They knew that their time had passed and that a republic of classical virtue was already slipping away in the decade after the Revolution.

There is a Plutarchian aspect to Wood's book, as there is to the word *character*; perhaps the best thing about the work is its intensification and clarification of our sense of the characters of the Founding Fathers, in respect both of their individual natures and the assumptions and principles they shared. George Washington emerges as something more or less than marmoreal, or perhaps I should say that his teeth are the only thing wooden about him. Our lack of a sense of Washington's distinctive personality is just that—our lack, not Washington's. We can hardly imagine today, without the insight of Wood, just how "public" a man Washington was. He suppressed his individuality in order to play his public role, and this so completely that he disappeared into that role. At the end of his life, he knew that the country had changed, that character now counted less than party affiliation, and that his historical moment was gone. "He was an extraordinary man who made it possible for ordinary men to rule. There has been no president quite like him, and we can be sure that we shall not see his like again." Exactly right; and there is more than the ratchet of history involved here, for Washington had indeed been outmoded in his own lifetime.

Wood clarifies for us the enigma of Thomas Jefferson, who did not believe in government or the state, but rather the virtue of the people. His position on slavery was optimistic, from his expectation that natural sociability would lead to the end of the peculiar institution. His historical error does not discredit his refusal to idolize the power of the state. His failure to anticipate the corruption of the people by the state is not his fault but that of the people. The aged Jefferson knew that the country had changed: "All, all dead! And ourselves left alone midst a new generation whom we know not, and who know not us," he wrote in 1825. Wood's Jefferson is an understandable man, and one who still has something to tell us.

Thomas Jefferson had declared in 1806 that "our constitution is a peace establishment—it is not calculated for war"—a truth that speaks to our time and helps explain why we have lived on a war footing for generations. James Madison was so determined to avoid the centralization of power that, as President, he was undoing the war-making powers of the government even as the War of 1812 approached. John Adams wrote Jefferson that Madison's administration was glorious—which is why Wood insists that "[Madison's] conception of war and government, whether we agree with it or not, might help us understand better the world we have lost."

Wood also provides us with a revealing negative example in his account of Aaron Burr. Hamilton, Jefferson's opposite politically, went out of his way to throw the election of 1801 to that same Jefferson, and he had a reason for doing it: "The public good must be paramount to every consideration." It was a matter of character, not politics. Burr had many qualifications for presidential leadership, but he lacked the greatest requirement of all: disinterestedness. He was not a man of neoclassical virtue, but he was the man of the future, for our political leaders today have much more in common with Burr than they do with the most admirable of the Founding Fathers.

Professor Wood's book is not a lament for a lost moment but an introduction to a world of nuances and ideas and ideals that are now so distant that the need for his analysis is manifest. As his chapters are elegantly written as well as insightful throughout, *Revolutionary Characters* both delights and instructs. The question that remains is what, if anything, we are going to do about the gap between the nobility of the Founding Era and contemporary chaos and corruption. Wood seems to me to imply that there is little or nothing we can do, except to enhance our awareness of it. Founders, keepers; losers, weepers.

Contributing editor James O. Tate is a professor of English literature at Dowling College on Long Island.

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A Son of Saint Dominic

by Fr. Michael P. Orsi

The Sacred Monster of Thomism: An Introduction to the Life and Legacy of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.
by R. Peddicord, O.P.
South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press; 232 pp., $25.00

◆

The appellation "*monstre sacré*" for Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (1877-1964), was coined by François Mauriac, an influential Catholic litterateur and contemporary of Garrigou, suggesting the ill feelings harbored by those who found their theological or philosophical positions contradicted by Garrigou. In this book, Fr. Richard Peddicord, O.P., associate professor of systematic theology at the Aquinas Institute, St. Louis University, reintroduces us to the life and legacy of one of Catholicism's most influential theologians in the period before Vatican II.

Garrigou was a Dominican and the leader of the neo-Thomist revival. His writings strongly influenced Catholic philosophy well beyond the middle of the 20th century. He was a great champion against modernism, described in Pius X's encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907) as the synthesis of all heresies. While difficult to summarize, modernism's basic foundation is a denial of the possibility of knowing objective truth. It is grounded not in science, but in Kantian immanentism, which sees "reality" as a projection of internal needs and sentimentalism. Garrigou's work fell into disfavor during the Second Vatican Council with the rise of historical Thomism, or *la nouvelle théologie*. Historical Thomism basically applied the historical-critical method of research, attempting to find the real Thomas Aquinas amidst the presumed accretions of interpretive contextualization. (We are more familiar with this methodology as used in "the search for the historical Jesus." As if the Gospels portray a fictional one!)

The main proponent of *la nouvelle théologie* was M. Dominique Chenu, O.P. (1895-1990), who had been Garrigou's prize student at the Angelicum. His work on Aquinas's "evangelical humanism" was incorporated into such conciliar texts as *Gaudium et Spes* (1965). Garrigou roundly condemned Chenu's methodology since, he believed, it contradicted the living Thomistic tradition as it had been passed on through Cajetan, Bañez, *et al.* Garrigou railed against Chenu and company, declaring that "uncovering a proposition's historical pedigree does not provide one with data pertaining to its veracity." Garrigou's concern was for objective truth, which can only be grasped when mind conforms to reality. He held that theology is grounded in a set of divinely revealed truths that illumine human reason weakened by Original Sin. These truths do not change.

In light of the aftermath of Vatican II and the general confusion that ensued, Garrigou's criticisms of *la nouvelle théologie* certainly carry more weight. Two examples come to mind. First, the traditional Catholic understanding of the social kingdom of Christ, which promoted a model of the ideal state as working in consort with the Church to help humans achieve their final good, God, was seemingly contradicted in *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965). This document, which encouraged a secular state permitting freedom of religion, was inspired by John Courtney Murray, S.J., an American proponent of *la nouvelle théologie*. (The theological argument is epitomized by Garrigou's falling out with Jacques Maritain, who supported the secular Gaullist government of France over the Vichy regime of Marshal Pétain, which promoted religious education and subsidized private schools.) Second, the strong emphasis on humanistic principles in *Gaudium et Spes* caused many Baby Boomers to lose sight of man's ultimate purpose, which is Heaven. (I remember vividly a prayer used at my college seminary, circa 1969, entitled "I believe in Man.") This emphasis on secular humanism has had a devastating effect on Catholic spirituality.

The spiritual and concomitant moral decline in the West following the council no doubt moved Pope John Paul II to issue the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (1995), emphasizing moral absolutes. And, in 1998, he reiterated traditional Thomistic principles in *Fides et Ratio* (1998), which reaffirms the supernatural order, human reason's capacity to know God, and our ability to arrive at the basic truths of existence, while once more confirming the necessity of divine revelation to open man to the truth. (The late Pope was both a former student of Garrigou and an attending bishop at Vatican II.) Both encyclicals may be seen as damage control in response to historical Thomism's unfortunate influence on, and the interpretation given to, some of the council's documents.

Peddicord provides the reader with a chronology of Garrigou's major philosophical and theological battles, while presenting him as a deeply devoted son of Saint Dominic, and gives us a brief exposé of his important insights into ascetic theology. In so doing, Peddicord has succeeded in moving me to read Garrigou's *Three Ages of the Spiritual Life*, a two-volume work that belongs in every Catholic library. Garrigou's appreciation of the high calling of every Christian to contemplation, made possible through baptismal grace, is testimony to his respect for persons and tempers its author's stern image with that of a more benign spiritual father. Peddicord's work should resurrect the study of Garrigou-Lagrange—his polemic with the philosophical relativism of Blondel and Bergson, his vigilant battle against modernism, and his battles against *la nouvelle théologie*. His work especially deserves reassessment in light of contemporary secularism and Pope Benedict's concern about "the dictatorship of relativism" now gripping Western civilization. Readers are likely to come away from this book with a desire to know more about a scholar who was loyal to the Church and Her embrace of traditional Thomism—one who, as we may now see, was more often right than wrong.

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by Philip Jenkins

Connecting the Dots

I am going to describe an incident, and you are going to tell me what the response to it would be.

It's a summer's day in a major American city, and a man driving a powerful SUV begins a homicidal rampage. He drives through many different neighborhoods, targeting blacks and other ethnic minorities. He runs people down in the street, killing 1 and injuring 19 others. After hitting people, he returns to run over their prone bodies. Any observer can tell his murderous intentions: As one nurse remarked, "He was trolling for people." In the most precise sense of the term, he spreads *terror* through several neighborhoods.

I suggest, with little fear of contradiction, that this would be a massive national story, hitting the headlines on CNN and all the major press outlets, domestic and foreign. It would be presented in terms of "Racist Assassin," and the usual experts would be on hand to analyze the political context. The talking head from the Southern Poverty Law Center would describe how the crime fits into the context of racist violence in the United States. Someone, certainly, would explain how administration policies had contributed to the climate of right-wing extremism, especially by white men resentful of social and cultural change.

Now, a reporter or anchor might raise an objection here: But surely, have not police determined that this individual was disturbed, had a long history of mental illness? Surely, there was no political context to such an act! And the talking head would become grim and thin-lipped: "But, Larry," he would say (or Bob, or whoever), "That may be. But this is not an isolated instance! Time and again, just over the past few months, we have seen racial attacks like this, in cities across the nation. This is no coincidence. If this is not actually the work of an organized movement, it says something very worrying about the state of white America [variant phrases that may be inserted here include "of white men" or "of Bush's America"]. You would have to be blind not to connect the dots."

Is that not a fair summary of the likely consequences? If so, it is curious in the extreme to recount the story of Omeed Aziz Popal, who, this past August, carried out exactly the attack described on the streets of San Francisco, except that his actions were not targeted against any particular minority. Don't worry too much if you have never heard of Mr. Popal. The attack made virtually no impact on the national news media, including the *New York Times*, and, if it was mentioned on CNN, the story was as transient as frost in May. Only the Bay Area media covered it in any detail, but with a resolute refusal to place Mr. Popal in any kind of political or cultural context. He was "crazed," with a lengthy story describing his family's efforts to find psychiatric help for their troubled kinsman. The longest analysis piece in the *San Francisco Chronicle* noted how, "Amid Chaos, Many Rushed To Aid Victims. Bizarre Episode's Bright Side: Those Who Put Selves At Risk." This particular "upper" concluded with the cheering remark, "It kind of makes you proud to live here."

Nothing suggests that Mr. Popal was anything other than a deeply disturbed individual, and we should surely feel sympathy for his family, as well as for the victims of his assaults. Yet the media coverage remains quite inexplicable, and you would look long and hard without finding the dreaded *M*-word. Although Mr. Popal, an Afghan, was of course a Muslim, no media report attached any significance to this fact. None pointed out that many Muslims in this country are subjected daily to torrents of invective attributing all the ills of the world to the U.S. government and its supporters, and urging them to resist such injustice; nor did any contemplate the effects of such rhetoric on the already disturbed.

More damningly, no report attempted to establish any kind of context. Had they done so, journalists would have noted immediately that Popal's crimes closely recalled other events from the past few months, notably the savage attack of Iranian immigrant Mohammed Reza Taheriazar, who, in March, drove an SUV into a crowd of white infidels at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. (He had had the forethought to strengthen his wheels because he knew he would have to reverse over victims, probably multiple times.) This man, too, was a crazed loner, though his motives were more explicitly political, with his announced goal to "avenge the deaths of Muslims around the world."

In July, the scene shifted to Seattle, where a Muslim man named Naveed Afzal Haq opened fire at the offices of the local Jewish Federation, as part of his effort to seek revenge against the state of Israel. So clear, in fact, were his declared motives that even local police were forced to apply the terrorist label, though the main thrust of media reporting soon shifted to his long history of mental illness. Fortunately, then, he was a crazed loner, rather than part of any organized conspiracy, or indeed any general trend. For all I know, there might have been many other such incidents, on a smaller scale. I only came across Popal's rampage by chance, because I happened to check out the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s website on the day of the event.

Daniel Pipes has suggested, alarmingly, that such incidents demonstrate the threat from "Sudden Jihad Syndrome," which can potentially turn any young Muslim in the West into a terrorist berserker. Frankly, I think Pipes goes too far, since this behavior is still so extremely rare. What really worries me are the wildly biased attitudes displayed by the media toward this undoubted problem, and the refusal to see any kind of systematic pattern or threat. I would not object if they were equally tolerant of lunatics from other portions of the political spectrum; but they evidently are not.

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by Scott P. Richert

Are the Good Times Really Over?

In mid-September, the original campus of Rockford's Barber-Colman Company was named an historic district and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It's a fitting end to one of Rockford's best-known manufacturing sites. Founded in 1900, the Barber-Colman Company gradually built the 15-building plant between Rock and River Streets, by the very ford in the Rock River that gave this city its name.

By 1989, as Jon Lundin notes in his indispensable *Rockford: An Illustrated History*, Barber-Colman had "six divisions, with nine facilities in four states and in England, 3,000 employees, and $250 million in annual sales." The Rock Street Plant remained Barber-Colman's world headquarters until 1982; today, it sits vacant in a struggling neighborhood. Redevelopment plans, aided by tax credits that accompany the historic designation, are under way, and, if all goes well, the campus may one day come alive again. This time, however, the life will be commercial and retail and residential and even, perhaps, academic—but not manufacturing. Just as Barber-Colman itself did, large manufacturing has moved away from the river, the visible heart of Rockford, and it is unlikely to return.

By 1900, Rockford was already an established industrial town. As Lundin describes it,

> Rockford had trouble keeping up with its booming industry after the Civil War, as factories seemed to sprout faster than prairie corn and new workers arrived constantly to fill the waiting jobs. In the last quarter of the century, in fact, Rockford's rate of growth was greater than that of any other city in Illinois, with the exception of Chicago. Fifth in population, Rockford had become the state's second-largest manufacturer.

The first official census, in 1850, pegged the town's population at 2,563; the next year, the Rockford Water Power Company was formed to build the dam that would attract factories to the area along the river; and, in 1852, Rockford was officially incorporated. One year later, the first Manny reapers were manufactured in Rockford, and Rockford's days as a manufacturing center had arrived.

John H. Manny, a cousin of the great-grandfather of Dr. John Howard, the founder of The Rockford Institute, was a brilliant mechanical inventor, and his reaper consistently bested others' machines in trials throughout the United States and in Europe. Manny was eventually awarded 23 patents and attracted the wrath of the inventor of an inferior reaper, one Cyrus McCormick, who sued him for patent infringement. Manny hired Edwin M. Stanton as his attorney. Stanton prevailed, winning the case in 1856, no thanks to the gangly lawyer on his legal team who was so inexperienced at trial that Stanton had to order him not to speak in the courtroom. Six years, a beard, and a top hat later, that bumbling-lawyer-turned-politician would choose Stanton as his Secretary of War.

Stanton's victory was a Pyrrhic one for Manny, who so wore himself out fighting the lawsuit that he died of consumption two weeks after the trial ended. He was only 30 years old.

The Manny reaper was only the first of many agricultural tools built in Rockford, and it signaled the need for local metalworks. In 1854, Duncan Forbes, a Scottish immigrant, arrived on the scene to satisfy that need. He and his son Alexander started an iron foundry on the south side of town, along the river. Known now as the Gunite Corporation, Forbes' company is Rockford's oldest continuously operating manufacturer—a fact that's somewhat surprising considering the lack of iron ore in the Rock River Valley.

That absence of primary resources is true of most of Rockford's industry, however. From the metals in our machine tools to the cotton and wool in our textiles, Rockford has always had to import the natural resources that her companies have turned into finished products. Even during those years when Rockford was second only to Grand Rapids, Michigan, in furniture production, the wood for that furniture came from Wisconsin, despite the 122 trees per city block that prompted the *New York Tribune* to nickname Rockford "The Forest City" in 1853.

From these details of Rockford history, a couple broad points about manufacturing emerge. The first is simple but often forgotten: Comparative advantage is about more than natural resources. Does anyone really believe that the only reason the English are better at making cloth and the Portuguese are better at making wine is because of the distribution of natural resources? Both English and American success in industry had as much to do with the character and ingenuity of the factory owners and their workers as it did with the bounty of nature. As manufacturing shifts to China, a virtually unlimited labor supply that keeps the cost of labor low is China's greatest comparative advantage. Not even the most ardent advocate of outsourcing, however, would be foolish enough to argue that the roots of China's success lie in developing new products or superior manufacturing processes. The Chinese government itself cooperates with Chinese manufacturers in widespread industrial espionage—an implicit recognition that, in anything involving creativity, China is at a distinct disadvantage.

Second, consider the timeline of industry in Rockford. The first settlement was in 1834; but the incorporation of the city, and the rise in population, accompanied the growth of manufacturing. Between 1850 and the founding of Barber-Colman in 1900, Rockford's population grew by 15 times, to 31,051. And, as Robert Monahan writes in his chapter on "Business and Industry" in another book of local history, *Sinnissippi Saga*, "In mid-May 1967," near the height of Rockford's manufacturing prowess, "the Rockford metro area had a total civilian work force of 121,600 of which 118,100 were employed." Moreover, "Manufacturing employed 56,575 while 47,950 held non-

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manufacturing jobs, [and] 11,125 were represented as self-employed, unpaid family or domestic workers."

This connection between manufacturing and population growth is true of similar-sized cities throughout the Midwest. To the extent that Rockford's experience has been different, it was, as Jon Lundin writes, because

> Rockford has been anything but typical in the way it earns its money. Economists point out that more than half of the earnings in Winnebago County [from the late 1940's to 1989] have come from manufacturing, and that this level is far above the national average.

Today, after almost 40 years of stagnation in real wages for manufacturing employees—a period that coincides with America's unilateral commitment to free trade as an ideology, rather than a tool—we would naturally expect that a disproportionate emphasis on manufacturing in a local economy would mean lower-than-average median wages, but that has historically not been the case. Robert Monahan, referring again to figures from May 1967, writes that, "Ranked 115th among cities with 133,522 inhabitants within its corporate limits of 29 square miles, Rockford is ranked 94th in the nation in effective buying power."

In other words, throughout most of the city's history, the preponderance of industrial employment made Rockford wealthier than otherwise comparable cities.

The September 12, 1949, issue of *Life* magazine acknowledged this fact in a 12-page article entitled "A sociologist looks at an American community." The article is based on the research of W. Lloyd Warner, a professor of sociology at the University of Chicago. Warner was the man responsible for dividing the traditional lower-, middle-, and upper-class distinction into six subclasses—lower-lower, upper-lower, lower-middle, upper-middle, lower-upper, and upper-upper—a division that became widely accepted following the publication of his book *Social Class in America*.

Warner's main concern—social mobility—seems quaint today, when the divide between the rich and the working class is growing at an astounding rate. But 60 years ago, as *Life* put it, "This phenomenon of social 'mobility' . . . is the distinguishing characteristic of U.S. democracy and the thing for which it is famous and envied throughout the world."

Nowhere was this ability to move between social classes more obvious in Rockford than in industry. Of the six people that *Life* chose as representative members of their respective classes, four were involved in manufacturing. Sam Sygulla, the representative of the lower-lower class, moved his family to Rockford after the war to work in a wood-products plant. Alex Armato, the upper-lower, "For 20 years . . . has worked as a skilled odd-job man at the Gunite foundry." Frank Frech, the representative of the upper-middle, "moved to Rockford to be comptroller of the Weiman Co., a leading furniture maker. Today, at 35, he has a good salary as the assistant general manager and a vice president of Weiman."

John Holmstrom, of the lower-upper, was outside of industry, as president of the Skandia Coal and Lumber Co., but *Life* notes that, like Holmstrom, "About one third of the people in Rockford are Swedish. Most of them live close to each other in East Rockford, and many are connected with the city's big machine-tool industry."

And of the top of the heap, the upper-upper, *Life* writes:

> A stranger to Rockford who asks to meet its most representative people will undoubtedly be told, by almost anyone he talks to, that he should by all means meet Mrs. Walter Forbes. "She is every bit as sweet as she looks." "That's what all the elite ought to be like." "She is really Rockford."

Mrs. Forbes was the widow of the grandson of Gunite founder Duncan Forbes. Her activities went well beyond running the foundry, which "employs 550, many of them old workers like Alex Armato who are loyal to the company and respect the integrity of the Forbes family." She was also

> a founder of the local Community Fund, a member of the board of Rockford College, president of the Boys' Farm School, a member of the Rockford Woman's Club and of the Monday Club, which is reserved for the daughters of Rockford's oldest families.

Small wonder, as *Life* wrote, that "The town's Old Guard respects her for her philanthropies and social work, and the younger crowd finds her a sympathetic and trusted advisor."

Women like Mrs. Forbes did not emerge out of thin air; they weren't simply born to their position; and their good works that built up the institutions that once made Rockford something more than it is today were inseparable from the sources of their wealth. When Duncan Forbes started his foundry, he could not foresee the activities of Marie Forbes 100 years later. But his industry, like many, became a force for social mobility not only for his descendants but for his workers—indeed, for an entire city.

In the September 25 issue of the *American Conservative*, James Kurth repeats the well-worn story that, "In 1914, Henry Ford paid his factory workers $5 a day, twice the going rate, with the aim of creating a broad middle class able to buy the cars they were building." Kurth was roundly criticized by libertarians for this remark—and, on one point, rightly so: Ford's stated reason for the increase in wages (and the reduction in the work day from nine hours to eight, which he introduced at the same time) was not, as Burton Folsom, Jr., has pointed out, to create "a broad middle class" but to make the rather monotonous assembly-line work more attractive to workers and, thus, to reduce "high rates of turnover and absenteeism."

The libertarian critique, however, went further, claiming that it is an "economic fallacy" to say that Ford's action created "a broad middle class able to buy the cars they were building." And yet, economic fallacy or no, that is precisely what happened. The higher wages increased worker satisfaction; productivity rose; Ford had more cars to sell; and, because of this higher volume, he was able both to lower the price of his cars and to raise the daily wage once again, to six dollars per day. The process continued, and not just in Ford's factories; across the country, other manufacturers followed Ford's lead. In fact, as Greg Kaza, himself a libertarian economist (albeit one with a much firmer grasp on reality), has pointed out, this became the basis for an implicit (and occasionally explicit) alliance between factory owners and workers, which lasted for the better part of the 20th century. The creation of a "broad middle class" may not have been Ford's intention, and modern economics may be able to "prove" that it could not have happened—and yet it did.

Which brings us to a third point: At

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their best, economic "laws" are just summaries of empirical observations of human behavior in the aggregate. Change the human behavior, and the "law" begins to look less set in stone. Because of Original Sin, of course, we have a sort of baseline of human behavior, and that's why, for instance, the "Law of Supply and Demand" basically "works." But when an economist says that something that is historically true is an "economic fallacy," the most charitable construction we can put on his statement is that, given baseline human behavior, such an event does not normally occur.

And yet, on a human level, economic "laws" are violated all the time—in families, among neighbors, in church congregations, for instance. Ludwig von Mises, in fact, was trying to deal with this reality when he formulated his theory of human action and of subjective valuation. When we value something in a nonmonetary way, we may, in fact, make choices that seem irrational from the standpoint of modern economics. Mises' contribution was to point out that these choices actually are rational. And they have economic consequences.

In other words, the choices we make regarding the things we value shape the economy. "The economy" itself is an abstraction, the aggregate of those choices. Change what people value, and you change the nature of the economy. In fact, we've seen that happen over the last 40 years, as people have become convinced that they should value the ephemeral, the cheap, the convenient, the consumption item. That, as much as—and, in fact, perhaps more than—anything else explains the rise of China as a manufacturing powerhouse for consumer goods, and it shows, once again, that *Chronicles* has been right to argue, for 30 years now, that there are no political solutions to cultural problems.

Knowing this, however, allows us to recognize that the fatalism that accompanies economic discussion in the United States is, at best, misplaced and, more often, is simply a way of justifying economic conditions that favor certain influential people and companies. "Free trade is always good"—even though, as David Hartman has pointed out, every industrialized country other than the United States has replaced her tariffs with value-added taxes, putting us, who simply repealed our tariffs, at a competitive disadvantage. "Globalization is inevitable"—even though the chief current beneficiary of globalization (China) is happy to accept the influx of financial and intellectual capital while practicing economic nationalism at home. "The United States needs to transition to a service economy"—even though it means falling wages and standards of living here, while those countries that eagerly snap up our outsourced manufacturing jobs see precisely the opposite trend. "Immigrants do jobs that Americans don't want to do"—and we know that because, during the great immigration moratorium of the 1990's, those jobs went unfilled, and the U.S. economy suffered. Oh, wait—there was no moratorium, because Tyson and Wal-Mart and Archer Daniels Midland and the construction industry in Southern California demanded the cheap labor of immigrants, both legal and illegal, in order to trim costs and increase profits.

There's one more trite saying that Rockford has proved wrong: "Bigger is better." Rockford has had her share of relatively large manufacturers, but the city's economy has never been held hostage by one single company. Robert Monahan wrote in 1969 that, "Unlike Detroit, Gary or Peoria, there is no single dominant industry that rules the town." Strangely, he continued, "Despite these factors Rockford has grown and prospered—becoming a world-recognized manufacturing center and commercial leader of the Rock River Valley." Today, looking at Detroit, Gary, and Peoria, not to mention Allentown and Flint and Youngstown, we can recognize that, as bad as things have sometimes been here in Rockford, this diversity may well have been our saving grace—and it points the way toward some lessons for the future of manufacturing in America, and for the revival of the American economy in general.

The future of American manufacturing lies in its past—by which I don't mean tariffs or other protective measures, because the economic interests that reap short-term benefits from our current system are far too politically entrenched for us to turn back that clock. Instead, the return to the past that I'm talking about is the revival of those characteristics that made small manufacturing so successful. The border-adjusted value-added tax that David Hartman has written about extensively in *Chronicles* could break the back of those political and economic interests and return control to local companies, whose concerns have always been very different from those of the Wall Street elite. When Duncan Forbes and Howard Colman and Amos Woodward and John H. Manny and the myriad other founders of Rockford manufacturing started their companies, they weren't thinking about the next quarterly profit-and-loss statement; they were intent on transforming their creative visions into reality—while making a living in the process. Taking on China in labor-intensive mass production is very hard; beating China in a particular niche with a superior product is less so. But that doesn't mean that small manufacturers are doomed to be stuck in such a niche forever, because these small building blocks can add up to something greater, as MARRV, the Manufacturers Association of the Rock River Valley, is starting to prove (see "A Third Way," *The Rockford Files*, October). With coordination and cooperation, small manufacturers can come together in ways that combine their strengths and allow them, corporately, to be competitive in markets that they could not crack on their own. Here, diversity is a strength; in a local economy dominated by a single industry, such cooperation isn't possible. And organizations such as MARRV, spread out across the country, would be poised not only to harness such diversity but to encourage it.

Anyone who spends any time reading the history of manufacturing in Rockford cannot help but be struck by the fact that this spirit of cooperation once existed here. Companies such as National Lock trained the men who started numerous other companies; managers moved back and forth between factories, before going on to lead their own; and important investors such as P.A. Peterson helped bankroll multiple companies that today we would regard as rivals, to the benefit of all of them. This cooperation was even reflected externally in the buildings and parks of this city, and in such institutions as Rockford College, which was the recipient of the philanthropy of numerous manufacturers.

It's not supposed to happen that way, the economists tell us. The free market is about competition, not cooperation; it's about profits, not philanthropy; it's about building up quarterly profit-and-loss statements, not about building up cities or keeping your neighbor employed.

We're in the fourth decade of trying it their way, and we can see the results in our city and across the country. Perhaps it's time to turn back the clock, bend the laws of economics a little bit, and help ourselves by helping one another. ◈

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Letter From Berlin

by Curtis Cate

A No-Longer-Broken City

◆

It is a strange experience, after an absence of 25 years, to revisit a city with which one was once linked by ties of solidarity. Stranger still was it to discover that Berlin, while it has been extraordinarily transformed in many respects, has remained extraordinarily unchanged in others.

Probably in no other European capital today is this contrast between a recent, crippling, hemiplegic past and a relatively healthy, unfettered present more pronounced than in this still war-scarred city—as though its present, hesitant predicament (What kind of city should it strive to become?) had been foreseen by Goethe in Faust's troubled confession to Mephistopheles: *"Zwei Seelen kämpfen, ach, in meiner Brust."* ("Two souls, alas, battle in my breast.")

But first, a few words of explanation. On August 13, 1961—not for nothing was it a deliberately chosen Sunday in the middle of Europe's somnolent holiday season—I was aroused from my torpor on France's Côte d'Azur by the dramatic news that the East Germans of the so-called German Democratic Republic (GDR) were now doing what had long been thought impossible, by cutting the city of Berlin in two. A few weeks before, Walter Ulbricht, the GDR's communist boss, had blandly declared, *"Niemand hat die Absicht, eine Mauer zu errichten."* ("No one has the intention of building a wall.") Yet, here were his armed Volkspolizei doing just that, by rolling out coils of barbed wire—it was weeks before anything resembling a wall began to appear—across scores of pedestrian crossing points between the Soviet-controlled East sector and the three Western sectors of Berlin. Even more effectively, the East Germans were interrupting all further intersector traffic on the underground U-Bahn subway and the overhead S-Bahn railway system, which, up till then, had enabled the partitioned city to maintain a minimum of metropolitan cohesion.

There was, however, no sign on the spot of any energetic response from the American, British, or French occupying forces to this flagrant breach of the four-power statutes governing the city, statutes which had been solemnly endorsed at the Potsdam Conference of 1945.

The moment I returned to Paris, I began bombarding Edward Weeks, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, for which I was then working, with letters insisting that what had happened was more than a mere "incident" and that we should do something to manifest our support for the understandably nervous West Berliners. I flew to Berlin, where I was received by Gen. Lucius Clay, President John F. Kennedy's personal envoy, who welcomed my suggestion that the *Atlantic* devote a special issue to Berlin.

With the help of his press secretary, Jim O'Donnell—a German-speaking *Kalter Krieger* (Cold Warrior) who had been the first American journalist to penetrate Adolf Hitler's Führerbunker (before it was blown up by the Soviet occupying authorities)—and of my old translator friend, Walter Hasenclever, we put together a special issue, which the *Atlantic* finally published under the title "Berlin: The Broken City."

The first thing that struck me when I returned there last January was the feeling of space that this vast city conveys—a result, partly, of the fact that, with a population of 3.4 million who inhabit an area of 344 square miles, Berlin has a population density 20-percent lower than that of Greater London (9,884 inhabitants per square mile, compared with 11,987). Its two punctual metropolitan railway systems also help to explain the absence of urban congestion, exasperatingly evident today in so many other German cities, as in the Greater Paris area of the *Ile de France*, with its 10.5 million inhabitants.

Whereas London, like Paris, boasts only one major river, Berlin has two, the Spree and the Havel, in addition to a number of connecting canals, which are crossed by close to 2,000 bridges—four times the number in Venice. It also includes more than a dozen lakes, as well as the huge, aptly named Grunewald—the "Green Forest," which is four times the size of the Bois de Boulogne in Paris and inhabited, it has been estimated, by more than 6,000 wild boars!

These geographic details help to explain the West Berliners' ability to survive the claustrophobic ordeals of an 11-month blockade (1948-49), when everything, including coal, had to be flown in to West Berlin's two airports at Tempelhof and Tegel in twin-prop Douglas DC-3s. Less well known are the numerous garden plots that their rustic ancestors had thoughtfully preserved against predatory "builders," which greatly helped the beleaguered West Berliners to survive their grim encirclement.

The abundance of rivers, canals, and lakes offers Berliners sporting attractions—swimming, row boating, yachting—unmatched by any other European capital, with the possible exception of Stockholm. Thanks, too, to the extensive greenery—Berlin has nine times as many trees as Paris—the city is blessed with something the damp, often fog-bound makeshift capital of Bonn never had: bracing air, air of such invigorating purity that it long ago inspired a local (for its inhabitants, a truly "national") anthem, *"Die Berliner Luft,"* ceremonially used on "great occasions" to greet such prominent visitors as Vice President Lyndon Johnson, Jack Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan.

"Berlin," a recently retired German diplomat explained to me whimsically, "has had to endure three successive destructions. The first was the destruction caused by the wartime bombings of the Second World War. The second was the shoddy rebuilding effort launched in the immediate postwar years. The third, begun in the 1960's in the West, was a program of destruction aimed at removing the makeshift buildings of the immediate postwar years in order to replace them by more 'modern' structures. Berlin has thus lived in an unsettling state of permanent architectural revolution that has continued to this day."

Regardless of what one may think of some of the architectural results, it is difficult not to be impressed by the scale of Berlin's reconstruction, even though no fewer than seven huge heaps of still-unremoved *Teufelstrümmer* ("devil's heaps" of rubble) remain visible in various parts of the once-battered city. No one traveling on the S-Bahn between Bülowstrasse, at the northeastern end of the Kurfürstendamm, and the Potsdamer-

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Platz can fail to notice the dismal state of the bombed-out no man's land that once separated the eastern and the western sectors of Berlin.

That said, the Kurfürstendamm is once again the fashionable artery it was in the pre-war years. But it has been kaleidoscopically "modernized" by the architectural intrusion, among the remnants of pompous Wilhelm II and art-deco edifices, of rotund and triangular, as well as square-paned steel-and-glass, monoliths, which glitter spectacularly at night. One of them is the huge, seven-story KaDeWe (Kaufhaus des Westens) department store, reputed by certain guidebooks to be the largest in Europe.

Politically as well as culturally, however, the center of gravity has been moving inexorably eastward to the central Mitte district of Berlin, once the administrative center of Hitler's Third Reich, and of its longer-lived Soviet successor. The obstructions that used to block more than 60 transit points between East and West Berlin have all disappeared, and anyone who wants to can now drive in an almost straight line from the vicinity of the Charlottenburg Castle in the West through the wooded Tiergarten on Europe's longest and broadest urban thoroughfare—the so-called Strasse des 17 Juni, which commemorates a brutally crushed revolt of East German workers in 1955—past the Brandenburg Gate and eastward along the once-elegant and now more prosaically rebuilt Unter den Linden artery all the way to the river-and-canal-surrounded "Island of Museums," which includes the famous Pergamon as well as the completely restored cathedral, with its crypt containing the remains of 95 Hohenzollern rulers.

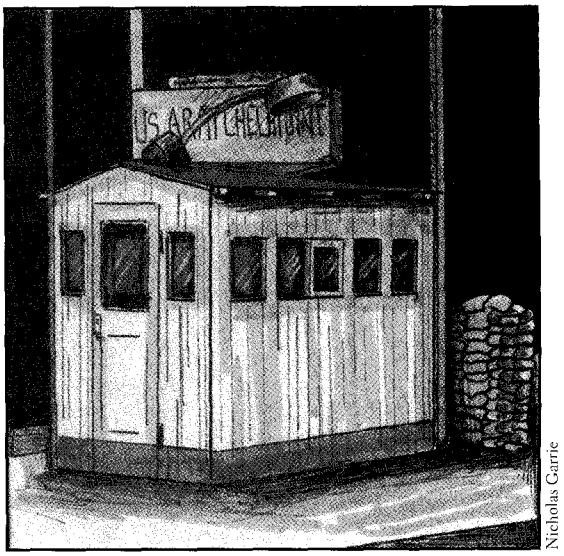
No attempt has been made to restore the pre-war pomp of the prestigious Wilhelmstrasse, where once were located the Führer's Reich-Chancellery and Ribbentrop's Foreign Ministry. The appropriately renamed Bundeskanzleramt, or Federal Chancellery, where Angela Merkel now has her offices, is housed some distance to the north in a huge, nine-story complex of buildings located at the northeastern end of the Tiergarten, next to the Spree.

From there, it is an easy walk to the once totally gutted and now completely rebuilt Reichstag, where the 614 deputies of the Bundestag can argue and debate in an amphitheater wondrously lit from above by a transparent dome ingeniously designed by British architect Sir Norman Foster to provide a maximum of natural daylight with an inbuilt circumference of 360 mirrors.

Adjacent to the Wilhelmstrasse is a shrub-and-thistle-infested plot of vacant land that is still waiting to be rebuilt. It was here, on the notorious Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse, that Heinrich Himmler and his deputy, Reinhard Heydrich, developed and expanded the headquarters of the dread Gestapo. After years of anguished debates, it was recently decided that this accursed site should house a museum exposing the horrors of the Nazi past—one of a dozen museums that have so far been opened to brand the villains or to honor their victims and those who, like Count Claus von Stauffenberg and other members of the July 20, 1944, plot, strove to resist Hitler.

For a Cold Warrior such as myself, it was particularly gratifying to discover that at least one Berlin landmark has been preserved as a memento. This is the control booth on the Friedrichstrasse, dubbed "Check-Point Charlie" by our GIs, which, from the moment the Wall began to rise in August 1961, became the only passageway for vehicles between the Russian and Allied sectors. The Russian control booth, with its maze of zigzagging concrete blocks, has disappeared, but two huge photographs of a bemedaled GI, mounted on a central pillar along with the warning sign, "YOU ARE LEAVING THE AMERICAN SECTOR," still adorn this once-famous crossing point on a major north-south artery where cars and buses now travel freely.

Nearby is a souvenir shop, advertising itself as the "Haus am Checkpoint Charlie," where everything from postcards, magazines, and books to the pram that was once used by an East Berlin mother to stage a daring escape from East to West keep alive the 28-year-long history of the infamous Wall. Initially, it was a kind of log cabin erected by an already white-haired Original (*i.e.*, a crank) named Rainer Hildebrandt. The son of a Stuttgart painter and a Jewish mother, Hildebrandt, whom I befriended while doing research for a book on the Berlin Wall crisis of 1961, was then regarded by many Berliners as a crackpot. Though generally no lover of souvenir shops, I was pleased to see that a younger generation of Berliners had decided to maintain his "house" after his death two years ago. For what he epitomized in his naive determination was the spirit of resistance and feeling of gratitude to America which, on a higher level, the rock-ribbed Ernst Reuter, West Berlin's first mayor (1947-53) and the founder of its Free University had so indomitably displayed during the first postwar years.



Nicholas Carrie

A spirit which, corrupted by party politics and the wild euphoria of the post-Wall 1990's, when everything suddenly seemed possible, is no longer visible in a now almost bankrupt city.

The late Curtis Cate was the author of The Ides of August, *devoted to the Berlin Wall crisis of 1961. See "Curtis Cate, R.I.P.,"* Cultural Revolutions, *in this issue.*

Letter From the Upper Midwest

by Sean Scallon

The Company Town

◆

The city of Arcadia, Wisconsin, population 2,400, recently became the town that roared in the immigration debate. Its new mayor, John Kimmel, barely four months on the job, made several proposals in a letter to the editor of the *Arcadia News-Leader*. The letter brought so much notoriety to this place, nestled in the Trempealeau River Valley of the Coulee region in Western Wisconsin near La Crosse, that even the biggest newspaper in the state, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, actually sent reporters to venture outside the "golden triangle" (the area defined by Madison, Milwaukee, and Green Bay) to

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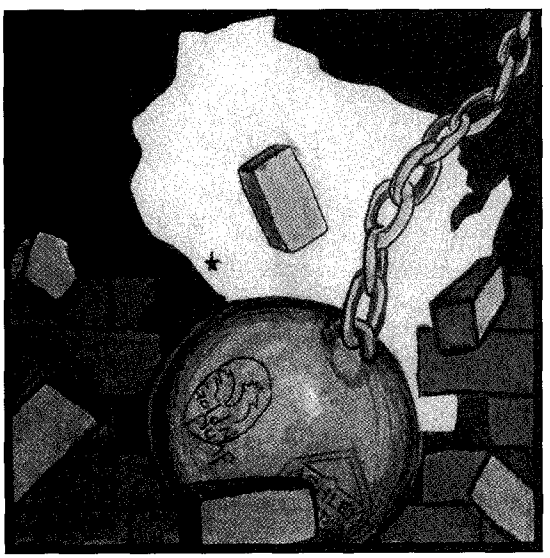
do a story on Mayor Kimmel's proposals. Arcadia had truly made the big time.

What was so notorious about the proposals made by the mayor (who is also the owner of Arcadia's appropriately named Detox Bar and Grill)? He argued that English should be the official language of the village. He said a local task force should forward complaints about illegal immigrants to the USCIS (formerly the INS). He thinks that local landlords should not rent their properties to illegal immigrants, and he even threatened to penalize them if they did so. He also stated that there should be some regulation on the display of foreign flags inside the village. (That would mean that the Norwegian and Polish flags that some residents fly would also be subject to regulation, which seems a bit draconian, given the ethnic heritage of the region; Mayor Kimmel himself is of German descent.)

As one might have guessed, the usual suspects had their noses bent out of joint by these proposals. But others—with substantial money, power, and influence in the community—also weighed in: They want to make sure such proposals don't get beyond the talking stage at the common council meeting.

Arcadia is the classic company town—a throwback to the days when small and medium-sized businesses were the local safety net, before the federal government took over in 1933. The biggest company here is Ashley Furniture. Beginning as a furniture wholesaler in Chicago, Ashley built its first factory in Arcadia in 1970, saving a dying town with good-paying manufacturing jobs and with conservation and flood-control projects that tamed the Trempealeau River, which regularly flooded. Ashley also built the village a magnificent park. Memorial Park isn't just any old Midwestern greenspace with a rusty Sherman tank and a single granite stone listing the county's war dead. Here, there's enough granite to build a whole state capitol, along with an M-60 tank and an F-16 fighter jet that was decommissioned and shipped to Arcadia, crate by crate, at the expense of Ashley CEO Ron Wanek. Besides the standard baseball and softball diamonds, volleyball courts, tennis courts, picnic areas, and playground, there's the local high school's football and track complex, the largest chicken-barbecue pit on the continent, a 2,500-seat amphitheater, and an outdoor pool and aquatic center. But the *pièce de résistance* is the outdoor museum, a granite structure two-miles long called the Avenue of the Heroes, detailing the history of Arcadia as well as that of every U.S. war and overseas entanglement. Inside are twisted metal beams from the World Trade Center that serve as a September 11 memorial, a statue of the early pioneers who settled Arcadia back in the 1850's (which, according to the brochure, are fashioned to look like members of Wanek's family), and plenty more: Washington, Jones, Lincoln, Kosciusko, Roosevelt, Pershing, MacArthur, Eisenhower, Patton, and Grant stand atop a hill called General's Overlook, which offers a beautiful view of the surrounding countryside. Even George H.W. Bush, Colin Powell, and H. Norman Schwarzkopf have their statues, and the Persian Gulf War Memorial also includes a monument to the first American female soldiers in combat. No expense has been spared to make this place as gaudy as you'd hope to find this side of the Potomac, and I wouldn't be surprised if plans for a War on Terror monument are already in the works. (It will be interesting to see who gets a statue; perhaps Donald Rumsfeld?)



Nicholas Garrie

All this generosity to Arcadia, combined with the fact that Ashley employs 4,000 area workers at its factory and world headquarters, means that the company's leaders are able to throw their weight around to get what they want. Former State Sen. Rod Moen found out the hard way when, in 2002, Ashley funded 527 groups (so-called soft-money PACs) that were running TV ads attacking Moen; the ads claimed the senator hadn't worked hard enough to secure an exemption from state DNR rules that would allow Ashley to expand their facilities onto 39 acres of wetlands. Moen lost to Eau Claire Fire Department Chief Ron Brown, and Ashley soon got its exemption. Given the level of influence that the company wields, Ashley's response to Kimmel's immigration proposals was not encouraging:

> We are hopeful that Mayor Kimmel, the Arcadia Common Council and all persons affected by Mayor Kimmel's political statements will act reasonably, within all federal and state laws, to achieve a result that fairly and honestly respects the rights of all persons who may be impacted by the mayor's comments.

The response of Gold'n Plump Chicken, a large food-processing plant in town, was even more negative:

> It is with sadness that we watch tensions rise in Arcadia, Wis., following Mayor Kimmel's column. We hope the community can find a peaceful and speedy resolution to this unfortunate situation.

In other words, start harassing our employees, and we will take our business elsewhere.

Immigration has become a national issue because many immigrants are settling in small towns and mid-sized cities away from the border and port areas of the country, upsetting previous cultural balances. In such places, if there's a food-processing plant or anything that has to do with food preparation or packaging, you will find immigrants, both legal and illegal. In Arcadia's case, they are the Mexicans and Hondurans working at Gold'n Plump. The plant was once known as Arcadia Fryers before being bought out by the St. Cloud, Minnesota-based Gold'n Plump. Today, it is a regional turkey and chicken processor, family owned by the Helgesons for the past 80 years. Unlike many others in this line of work, Gold'n Plump uses poultry raised by local farmers in its products, instead of raising the birds themselves in factory farms. However, even this small-scale operation pays the industry standard for its line of work: $9 to $11 per hour as a starting wage.

This standard was set across the state line in Austin, Minnesota, at the Hormel plant. In the mid-1980's, Austin's meat-

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packers union held a nasty strike that lasted a year and a half; the Minnesota National Guard was called up to preserve order in the town. The union was busted, and wages were slashed to their current minimums. (The Hormel strike was the subject of the documentary *American Dream*, which won an Oscar in 1991.)

However, there was a problem. It seems that the local workforce was not satisfied with the wages Hormel was offering workers in their slaughterhouse. Job-retention rates were low, and turnover was high, as workers decided that they could not raise their families on what Hormel and other food processors across the country were paying. So the labor market voted with its feet.

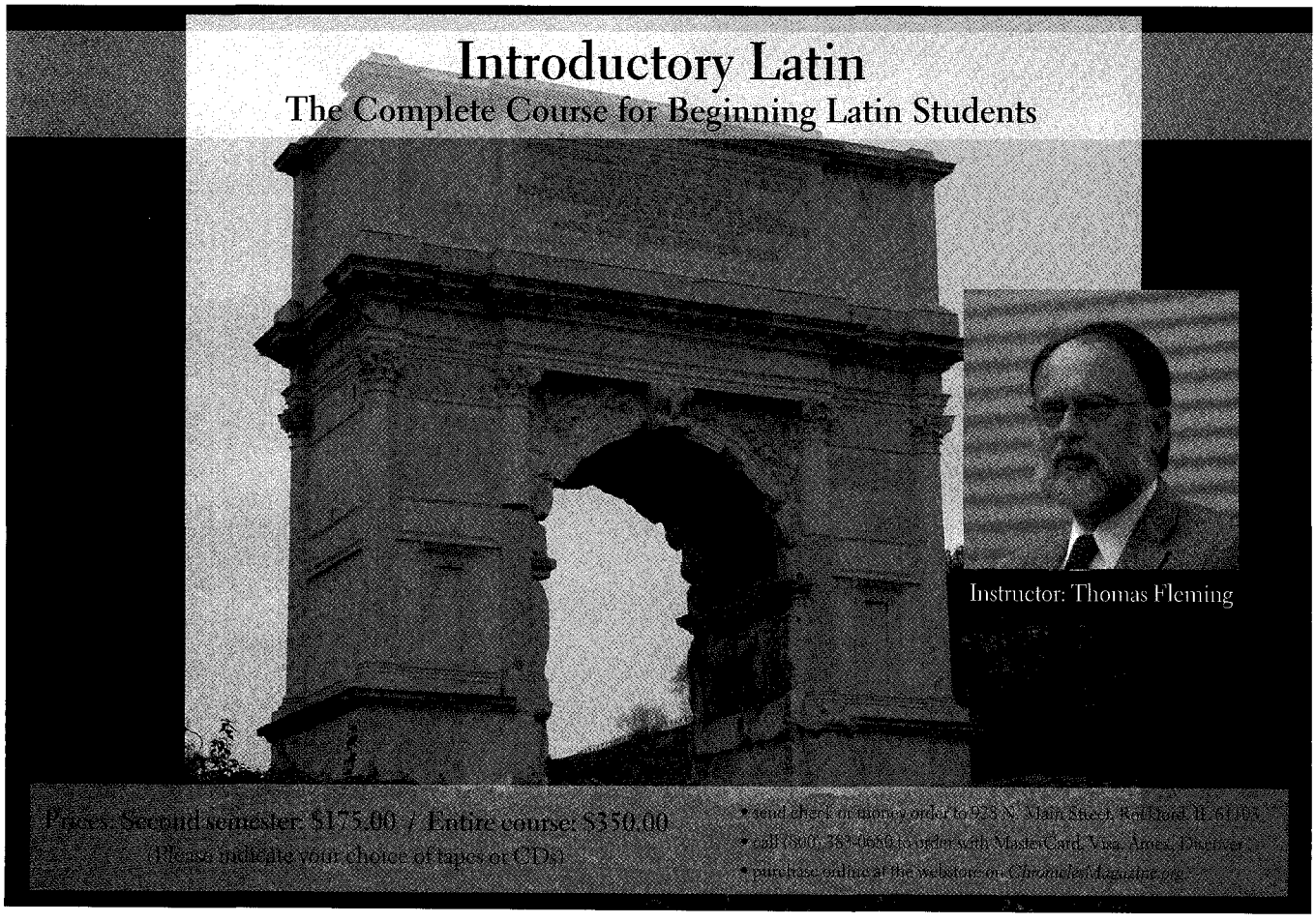
This, you might say, is a classic example of a "job Americans won't do anymore"; after all, meat packing and food processing are not exactly glamorous. Of course, neither is being a garbage man, yet we do not hear of shortages of "sanitation engineers." Why? Because the job pays well, as it must in order to attract and retain workers. This was once true of meat packing. However, Hormel and other such companies were caught in a vise, because, if there's one other nonnegotiable aspect of the U.S. economy besides cheap gas, it's cheap food. Hormel feared that raising wages would make the company uncompetitive during the commodities deflation of the 1980's and 90's. At the same time, the rising costs of healthcare, education, and transportation made it impossible for a single wage-earner to work there for under $15 per hour.

What was the answer to this dilemma? Import the workforce! Turn the Plains into the South Side of Chicago. Soon, food processors began spreading the word south of the border that there were good-paying jobs for all who could elude the INS. As those workers began telling their friends and family members back home about these opportunities in El Norte, the trickle became a flood. Austin and Arcadia became the beneficiaries of social engineering, courtesy of the "free market." The food companies benefited, too, because such workers were less likely to complain to OSHA if their fingers were cut off in slicing machines; nor would the companies have to pay for years of health benefits.

No one outside of Ashley Furniture really knows how many immigrants work there; the company refuses to release such statistics about its workforce. However, there probably aren't too many, as Ashley's wages and work environment are still pretty attractive to local workers. But ever since the Chinese got into the furniture-making business, Ashley has found itself in the free market's competitive vise. That is why it wanted to expand the plant over wetlands. Now, Ashley may have to slash wages in order to stay competitive. If that happens, it, too, could face the same choice that Gold'n Plump and other food companies—and construction companies and hotels and countless other industries—have had to face: Find a different workforce that will work cheap, or go under. And if Ashley goes under, it will take Arcadia with it.

That's why Mayor Kimmel's proposals will get a hearing, but not much more than that. Immigration is as much a local issue as it is a national issue, and it's a good thing to see public officials such as Mayor Kimmel take action, in the face of federal impotence. We should not forget, however, that powerful forces are in favor of unlimited immigration to, and migration throughout, the United States, and that such forces exist in company towns like Arcadia.

Sean Scallon is a journalist living in Arkansaw, Wisconsin.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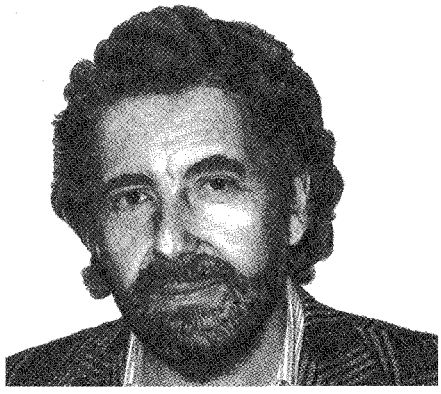
by Andrei Navrozov

Déjà Vu by the Gross



Off the back of the little three-wheel ladybug-shiny truck in front of the house, parked under an exuberant tree to which one of the neighbors had attached a washing line, early this morning I bought two yellow melons, three kilos of Muscat grapes, two kilos of late, hillside peaches, a kilo each of plums and persimmons, a large head of lettuce, a dozen lemons, six pears of some unknown variety the size of a sheep's head, and a handful of fresh walnuts, still in their involucres of roughly polished emerald. I paid $18 for the lot, and from the eyebrow raised by Carmelo as though up a flagstaff of fiscal prudence, I understood that I may have overpaid. Eighteen dollars represents one tenth of my liquid assets at the moment, and I will bear his tactical signal in mind when I do the week's shopping again next Saturday. Carmelo is the owner of the local bar, who launches my mornings with a ten-percent discount on a 70-cent cup of coffee.

A few days ago I was in London, where an old friend—whose divorce from a Russian tycoon, some years ago, had made her a woman of substance, without, however, inducing her to forget that it is usually the poor who make one laugh—took me out to dinner at an expensive restaurant in Mayfair. Expensive means something like my total assets per person, excluding the wine, the tip, and the cab fare. We would be six at dinner, and hence the aggregate outlay for the meal could keep me in ripe local fruit and garden-fresh vegetables for well over a year. If you include the wine, I could probably have my apartment repainted into the bargain. Knowing perfectly well that she would be the one paying, my friend had chosen the venue without consulting me; though so blunted, in the course of more than a year's absence from London, had my social intuition and my instinct of self-preservation in the metropolitan jungle become, that I wouldn't have known what to say to her if she had. In any event, it was only as I arrived at the door that I heard the word *fusion* tripping merrily off the tongue of a fellow diner.

Certain words, such as *patriotic*, *holocaust*, *revolutionary*, *atrocities*, *media*, *capitalism*, *prostitute*, and, most recently and spectacularly, *terrorism*, are almost entirely political constructions, transparently ill made and somehow working-class Victorian, like those blind houses of grimy pale-yellow brick one glimpses from the window of a local train, thinking, "I just can't believe that anybody would actually live here." In an equally dispiriting, though perhaps less important way, the word *fusion* has insinuated itself into the vocabulary of gastronomy in what is now the First World, with the political aim of confusing everything and misleading as many pallets as possible.

Like Esperanto and the numberless language reforms mooted in their day, or the rampant chimera of European unification, fusion is power without responsibility. The people are the putative speakers, voters, or diners, yet their passivity is nearly absolute, gradually relegated as they have been to the position of voiceless animals ingesting amorphous, homogenized, mysteriously nutritious pap handed down from the inscrutable above. Swine reared on pigswill is as apt an image as any, I reckon. The realization that here the smug diners were paying through the nose for their place at the trough only made the image more gripping, inescapable, Orwellian.

Mass travel, cheap tourism, and the whole airport phenomenon have played an important part over the last few decades in defining the practice of global fusion. Fluorescent lights, obligatory trainers, cardboard lunches, plastic knives, body searches, arbitrary regulations, uniformed myrmidons, serpentine lines, and the plausibly porcine idea of going somewhere one can, have all contributed to the trough mentality on which politicians rely to cajole their electorates aboard northbound cattle trains whose alleged destination is the Promised Land.

That the specter of Islamic terror is a welcome boon to the nascent, specifically Western, variety of totalitarianism, which I would describe as paternal, proprietary, or better yet, husbandmanly, has long been obvious. I saw it in action again on the way back from London. I was travelling in the company of a young woman, admittedly of great intellect and talent, whose external form, in my hopelessly antiquated mind, conjured up some suitably antiquated notions of femininity. This was a mistake. She should have worn a burqa.

The harpies representing the state, the law, the airport authority, the harpies' and myrmidons' malevolent union and pension fund, the supranational provisional government of all progressive mankind for the duration of its strategic exodus to the Promised Land, stopped my companion to search her head to exquisite foot, size 37 Italian. Plainly, theirs was less a war on Islamic terror than the greater *jihad*, waged now and always and from the beginning of time, on class, on beauty, on nature, on dignity, and on distinction. At length, they found in a coat pocket, and gleefully confiscated, a tiny perfume atomizer. "Aha!" one of the guards said, throwing it in the wire basket that served to contain weapons of mass destruction.

She had three lipsticks in her purse, and these were taken away, "to ask the supervisor if you're allowed more than one lipstick," behind the sort of makeshift curtain where the Wizard of Oz could be imagined hiding had the children's classic been set in the Sylhet district of Assam in Bangladesh before independence. "You are the terrorists, you know," I could not restrain myself from telling the guard. Of course, in retrospect I realize that this was unfair to the terrorists, to the people who don't want to go to the Promised Land and would rather become suicide bombers. She was just a husbandman like the rest, doing her job, making sure the swine behaved as they should. And getting paid for it of course so that in her turn she too could go out to a fashionable restaurant and treat herself to a bit of fusion.

No, I don't think I'll take Carmelo's hint and quibble with the man in the ladybug-shiny truck about the price of pears next Saturday. ©

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by Srdja Trifkovic

Iraq: The Least Bad Scenario

The Democrats' victory on November 7 and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's departure a day later marked the beginning of the end game in Iraq. The moment is reminiscent of December 1970, when President Nixon decided to pull U.S. forces out of Vietnam by the end of the following year. The major difference is that Nixon's decision was very much his own—his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, among others, had opposed it—whereas President George W. Bush would have preferred to "stay the course" "until the job is done."

It is noteworthy that Dr. Kissinger, ever the realist, declared last November that the United States would have to choose between stability and democracy in Iraq—and that democracy was out of reach: "I think that's reality. I think that was true from the beginning," he said.

> Iraq is not a nation in the historic sense . . . The evolution of democracy . . . usually has to go through a phase in which a nation [is] born. And by attempting to skip that process, our valid goals were distorted into what we are now seeing.

The Bush policy has failed. The "job" has never been clearly defined, and therefore—to paraphrase Mr. Rumsfeld—the presumed moment of its successful completion has always been an *unknown* unknown. Domestic approval for President Bush's handling of Iraq has dropped to the lowest level ever—31 percent—and the erosion of support was most pronounced among self-designated conservatives and Republican men, key supporters who elected Bush to the White House and gave him a second term in 2004.

The appointment of Robert M. Gates to replace Donald Rumsfeld was a belated intervention by the grown-up team of George H.W. Bush to put the house in order and salvage the family name. The self-serving idiots who cooked up the mess denied the obvious, but the insiders know the truth: When *Washington Post* reporter Thomas Ricks was asked if a *Newsweek* headline, "Father knows best," was just "an easy, cheap Oedipal way for the press to characterize what's going on," he responded that "just because it's easy and cheap doesn't mean it's wrong."

Another visible sign that the realists are attempting to limit neocon damage was the long-expected return of James A. Baker III to center stage, as co-head of the Iraq Study Group (ISG). The prodigal son opposed the establishment of the ISG a year ago, but, by late November, he was reduced to citing it four times in a single speech.

The commission urged the Bush administration to open diplomatic talks with Iran and Syria, to make it feasible to start "redeploying" (*i.e.*, pulling out) U.S. forces from the region in 2007.

In recent months, despite his millenarian rhetoric, President Ahmadinejad's foreign-policy objective has been to convince Mr. Bush that regional stability is impossible without his acquiescence and that the cost of trying to isolate and intimidate Iran may prove prohibitive. He is essentially right: The United States has no formula to contain Iran and, at the same time, maintain the semblance of Shiite cooperation in Iraq. It would be in the American interest to give Iran a stake in a new regional-stability framework. A viable resolution of the nuclear row depends very much on how the parties can come to terms with each other politically. If Washington recognized Tehran's regime, stopped threatening it, and agreed to controls on weapons of mass destruction across the region—including Israel's—it would make considerable progress in dealing with the nuclear issue. A bullish, increasingly self-confident Mr. Ahmadinejad will demand a price for his stake in the project that Mr. Bush had been loath to pay. In the end, he may have no choice—and the predicament is entirely of his own making.

Unlike Ahmadinejad, Bashir Assad is a secularist who can be won over to the idea of a peace treaty with Israel in return for Washington's recognition of the legitimacy of his regime. Furthermore, Hezbollah—feeling cocky after its successes last July—cannot function in Lebanon if the lifeline from Damascus is severed. Other Arab countries may publicly frown on this scenario while discreetly supporting it. The Arab world is aware of the connection between Iran and Hezbollah, and it is uncomfortable with the implications of Iran's growing influence and stature in the region. If offered a new regional arrangement underwritten by the United States that would make him an accepted player, Assad may terminate all support for the insurgents in Iraq and help make the quagmire there more manageable for the United States.

Baker's suggestion makes eminent sense. Syria has never been guilty of a terrorist outrage comparable to Lockerbie, yet Libya's Qaddafi—having done his penance—has been rehabilitated. In the aftermath of September 11, Damascus passed on to the United States hundreds of files on Al Qaeda and other anti-Western terrorists and their organizations throughout the Middle East, many of whom targeted Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and others besides the United States. By contrast, any "regime change" in Damascus remains a risky proposition as long as the Muslim Brotherhood represents the only likely alternative to Assad.

The ISG also recommended telling the Shiite-led Baghdad government that U.S. troops will only stay if it ends sectarian violence. That Iraq is in the grip of a civil war is no longer a matter of semantic dispute, and the United States must not act, or be perceived as acting, in support of one side in that war. The Shiites have upped the ante by sentencing Saddam to death, and Washington must prevent his execution in order to make a phased disengagement possible. A viable exit strategy demands the development of a working rapport with Iraq's six million Sunnis, who provide the backbone of the insurgency. Seeing firsthand that they cannot expect fairness or justice from this or any other Shiite-dominated government, those Sunnis will be even less motivated than before to end their resistance.

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The Sunnis rightly fear economic disadvantage by being left with no oil, and Washington should exert its influence to ensure that oil and gas revenues—which now go largely to the Shiite south and the Kurdish north—are more equitably divided. It is necessary to place Kirkuk—a major center of oil production—in the Sunni Arab unit in the middle of the country. We need a Sunni stake in the coming Iraqi oil bonanza. For p.r. purposes, it can be presented as "democratic": There is, in fact, no Kurdish majority in the city of Kirkuk or its region. Kurdish nationalists may claim it as their regional capital for sentimental and financial reasons, but they should be told in no uncertain terms that they cannot have it all. *De facto* statehood in the northern third of Iraq—minus Kirkuk—is more than the Kurds could have hoped for a mere decade ago. They should count their blessings and play along.

Winning over the Kurds is necessary to prevent a joint Shiite-Kurdish front against such proposals. This demands the lure of substantial legally sanctioned and constitutionally enshrined Kurdish autonomy in a decentralized Iraq (whether Ankara likes it or not), with the parallel warning to the Kurds that, in the final analysis, they have less reason to fear the dethroned Sunnis than they do Ayatollah al-Sistani and his Shiites, whose long-term goal is to turn the whole of Iraq into an Islamic republic ruled by *sharia*. The Shiites' continued good will, by contrast, may be purchased by allowing them to turn their oil-rich putative statelet in the south into a mini-Islamistan if they are so keen on the concept, so long as the Iranians are kept firmly out of the proceedings.

To control the situation, the United States will need to create a split within the ranks of Iraqi insurgents between the ideologues of *jihad*, who don't give a hoot for Iraq as such but simply want to use her as a chapter and a focal point in their global struggle, and those who are driven primarily by nationalist and tribal motives. This would require overcoming distaste for a dialogue with former Ba'athists and Saddam loyalists, but no such dialogue will be possible if Saddam is hanged under the noses of American soldiers.

On the other hand, if Washington were to act to prevent such an outcome, the breach with the Shiites would draw closer and make Iraq even less governable than she is today. Since such a breach is likely inevitable, it is better to risk it now and level the playing field than to continue pandering to Shiite designs that are quickly turning most of Iraq into an Islamic republic in the image of Iran. Caught between the Sunni rock and the Shiite hard place—again, both of his own making—Mr. Bush should ensure that Saddam's additional trials and subsequent appeals will drag on through the next two years of an embarrassing, lame-duck presidency.

With the return of the realists, it is finally possible to expect the development of a plan construed along these or similar lines. It is ironic that the current Bush administration resorted to "realist" arguments in 2003, when it used nonexistent WMDs as an excuse for a Wilsonian mission of spreading democracy, but the time for such inanities is finally over.

The disengagement scenario will contain many unknowns and may generate new dynamics that are difficult to predict and control. Unlike anything we have seen coming from the White House, the Pentagon, or the State Department under George H.W. Bush's inept son, however, it also offers a chance for disengagement without any further harm to America's standing, and without any further transformation of Iraq into a chaotic, ungovernable base for *jihad*.

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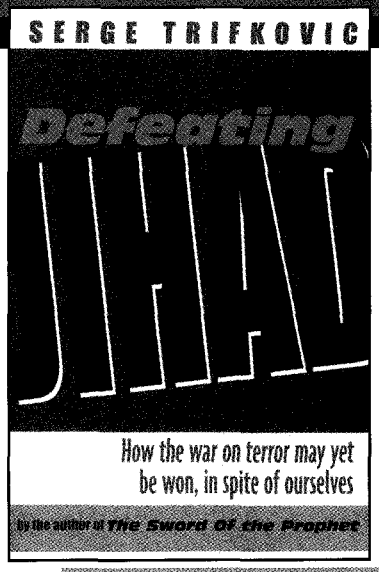
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FILM

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

by Roger D. McGrath

Flags of Our Fathers

Produced by Clint Eastwood, Robert Lorenz, and Steven Spielberg
Directed by Clint Eastwood
Screenplay by William Broyles, Jr., and Paul Haggis, from the book by James Bradley and Ron Powers
Distributed by DreamWorks Pictures and Warner Bros. Pictures

Because I thoroughly enjoyed the book, because Clint Eastwood is the director, and because Marines crave movies about Marines, I had high hopes for the movie *Flags of Our Fathers*. I was largely disappointed. The screenplay is terribly uneven; so, too, is the direction. Clint Eastwood is solely credited as director, but there are scenes so puerile and caricatured in nature that I would have sworn they had been directed by Steven Spielberg, the movie's producer. William Broyles, Jr., and Paul Haggis are credited with writing the screenplay. This may explain much of the movie's swings from good, to bad, to ugly. I would like to think that the good is the product of Broyles, a Texan, a Marine veteran, and a regular guy; and the bad and ugly, of Haggis, a Canadian who describes himself as a daring artist who breaks all the rules. I suspect Haggis takes himself a bit too seriously and forgets that his first duty is to tell a good story. Someone did break all the rules in *Flags*: The story swings from the present to flashbacks to the future to reminiscences to the present. About all that is left out is past perfect and subjunctive. Perhaps this is modern movie making, but it is not good storytelling. Every few minutes, we are reminded that we are watching a movie.

Having read the book, I thought that the movie would be about the battle for Iwo Jima and the six Marines—especially Navy corpsman Jack Bradley—who participated in the second flag raising on Mt. Suribachi, immortalized by Joe Rosenthal's famous photograph. Much to my disappointment, *Flags* spends a wildly disproportionate amount of time on the War Bond Drive that the three surviving flag raisers were ordered to go on during the spring of 1945—and the greatest focus is on Ira Hayes, the American Indian Marine. I felt that I had been lured into the theater under false pretenses. *Ira Hayes and the War Bond Drive* would have been a more fitting title for the movie. Adam Beach, who plays Hayes, has the meatiest role, and he does an outstanding job. An Ojibwa Indian from Canada, Beach looks nothing like the real Ira Hayes, a Pima from Arizona. Beach is lean and nearly six-feet tall, a half-foot taller than the chunky Hayes. Beach could almost be a collar model.

More important than these physical discrepancies, though, are the suggestions in the movie that Hayes' alcoholism was a consequence of the war. Actually, Hayes had been arrested for drunk and disorderly conduct on several occasions *before* he enlisted in the Marines. Then, too, the movie has Hayes talking a lot more than he ever did in real life—before, during, or after the Corps. Those who knew him growing up on the Pima reservation during the 1930's consistently describe him as shy, withdrawn, and uncommunicative. He was like his father, who never spoke unless spoken to. Nonetheless, Hayes' character in the movie generally reflects the real-life Hayes and is more fully developed than any other character, except possibly Bradley's. The focus on Hayes is not long overdue—he was portrayed by Lee Marvin in *The American* (1960) and by Tony Curtis in *The Outsider* (1961). At least they got an Indian to portray him this time. Although not many know it, Hayes played himself in *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949).

Also playing themselves in *Sands of Iwo Jima* were Jack Bradley and Rene Gagnon, the two other flag-raising survivors who pounded the War Bond trail. Ryan Phillippe does a good job working with what he is given portraying Doc Bradley. Nonetheless, the character is only thinly developed. To compensate for this, and for the underdevelopment of other characters as well, the movie has several History Channel moments with actors playing old vets recalling Bradley and others on Iwo. The interviews with the putative vets are some of the most awkward and jarring juxtapositions I have ever seen in a movie. Is this suddenly a documentary made for cable television? But not to worry. We are soon yanked out of the documentary and back to the movie. How many times are we supposed to suspend disbelief? All these devices ultimately make Bradley, a typical American boy caught up in a go-dawful battle, more an abstraction than a flesh-and-blood figure with whom we can empathize. Too bad, because the book has the reader feeling Bradley's pride, strength, horror, and agony.

At the same time, the movie's depiction of the grisly carnage and death that was Iwo is light years beyond what is done in *Sands of Iwo Jima* or any of the other good, old war movies. The old movies, far better in nearly every other way, are sadly lacking in blood and gore, which is a necessary reality check. As Robert E. Lee put it, "It is well that war is so terrible—lest we should grow too fond of it." On Iwo, the Japanese rained artillery, mortar, and machine-gun fire down on the Marines landing on Green Beach from the heights of Suribachi. Hundreds of Marines were killed on D-Day, and hundreds more wounded. D+1 wasn't much better. Most of the Marines killed did not have neat little bullet holes in them as John Wayne's character, Sergeant Stryker, did in *Sands* but were blown apart by exploding shells. Torsos, limbs, and heads were scattered across the volcanic sands in a manner that made the beach look like a slaughterhouse. Doc Bradley's role in treating wounded Marines is heart-rending and poignant—he saves some but loses many. He is scarred for life.

Stunningly, the movie makes nothing of the action for which Bradley was awarded the Navy Cross, second only to the Medal of Honor. Sprinting through 30 yards of withering Japanese fire, the brave corpsman threw himself between the flying lead and the body of a wounded Marine. With other Marines watching from foxholes, Bradley signaled them to stay put. He then stabilized the wounded Marine's condition and carried him through the same wall of lead to safety. Those watching had no explanation for why he was not sliced to ribbons by the hundreds of machine-gun bullets that filled the air. Is not developing such a heroic scene this mov-

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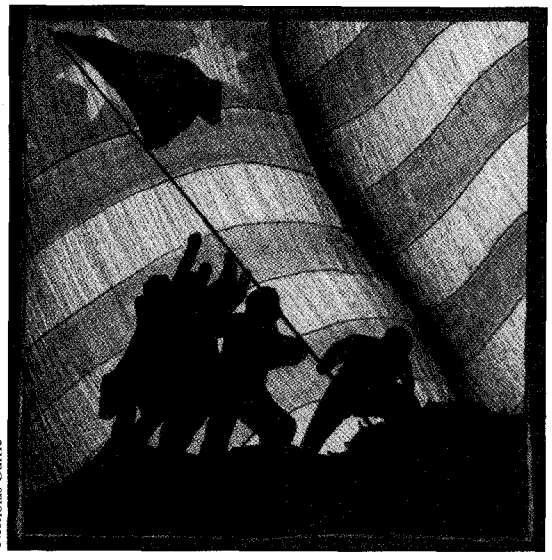

Nicholas Garrie

ie's way of saying that everyone is equally a hero just for being there—or that there are no heroes? That is not the case in battle. Some men perform acts that leave others, with more practical attitudes about self-preservation, in awe.

Rene Gagnon is well played by Jesse Bradford, but Bradford is no Gagnon in what was most distinctive about Gagnon. The Marines of the 2nd Battalion, 28th Regiment, said, "We have our own Tyrone Power." Gagnon was strikingly handsome and a dead ringer for the dashing movie star. Photographs of Gagnon are indistinguishable from those of Power. I suppose it is too much to expect a casting director to find another Tyrone Power, but Bradford, while a handsome actor, simply does not have the exceptional good looks necessary for the part. Coincidentally, the real Tyrone Power, a Marine pilot, made numerous landings on the island during the height of the battle, ferrying in supplies and hauling out wounded men in a C-46. Although he was one of the top stars in Hollywood and a civilian pilot, Power had enlisted in the Corps in 1942 as a private and went through boot camp at MCRD, San Diego, before going to officer's school and flight training. Unfortunately, the movie misses a great opportunity to develop the multiple coincidences that connected Rene Gagnon and Tyrone Power.

The movie also misses a great opportunity to develop Mike Strank, Franklin Sousley, and Harlon Block as characters on screen. My wife, who had not read the book, had to ask me about the characters—the other three flag raisers in the photo. Sgt. Mike Strank was the squad leader and "a Marine's Marine." The son of an immigrant Pennsylvania coal miner, he was a physical specimen who inspired his men through example, leading from the front. He had been in the Corps since the late 1930's and had fought on Bougainville before Iwo. Lanky Franklin Sousley was a red-haired and freckled-faced, smiling hillbilly from eastern Kentucky with, as a boyhood friend described, "the biggest hands I ever saw on a human—like two big hams hanging there." Harlon Block was a powerfully built high-school football star from Texas. He and all the seniors on the football squad joined the Marines together. He is the Marine, back to the camera, planting the pipe flagpole into the top of Suribachi.

One movie cannot cover everything, of course, but Strank, Sousley, and Block loomed large in the book and seem to have been sacrificed for a focus on the War Bond Drive. Moreover, the movie is nearly two-and-a-half hours long, more than enough time for these essential characters to have been well developed. Take a look at what John Ford did with a war movie from an earlier era, *Fort Apache*. In two hours of screen time, more than a half-dozen characters are exquisitely developed. Clint Eastwood is purportedly a student of John Ford. I just cannot understand it.

Nor can I understand why *Flags of Our Fathers* does not properly introduce Iwo Jima: the nature of the conflict and the nature of the enemy in the Pacific; the reason for not leapfrogging the flyspeck of an island; the different type of defense the Japanese employed on Iwo; just what the Marines were expected to do. This could all have been done easily and quickly. A scene with intelligence officers briefing the men could have accomplished most of it. Moreover, I suspect most Marines will find it particularly irksome that the Marines are not particularly Marine. They could very well be soldiers. Yes, of course, we know they are Marines because history and the movie say so. However, the men do not act or speak like Marines. I asked a Marine buddy of mine, "How did you know they are Marines?" He was stumped other than to say that everybody knows that the Marines took Iwo. The Marines have their own particular argot—which, at times, can be almost a foreign language—and ways of issuing commands and answering those commands. NCOs and officers do things the Marine way, which is different from the Army way. This was all missing. So, too, was the special *esprit de corps* of the Corps, which is no romantic myth.

Also missing was the anger, the rage, that nearly everyone felt toward the "Japs," the "Nips," the "yellow bastards"—words never spoken in the movie. "Remember Pearl Harbor" and "Remember Bataan" were on everyone's lips, in their thoughts. The Japanese bombed us in a dastardly sneak attack while we were at war with no one! Moreover, after the mind-boggling atrocities the Japanese committed on Guadalcanal, the Marines fought with a ferocity and a vengeance that was awesome. Intelligence officers begged that captured Japanese be brought in alive, but the Marines, by God, would have none of it.

Sgt. Ralph Walker Willis, who has written for *Chronicles* and who landed on D-day on Iwo and fought through to the end of the campaign, described to me how he and a buddy cleaned out one of the final pockets of Japanese resistance on Iwo. He, the buddy, and several other Marines, some with flamethrowers, worked their way down a rocky gully. On either side were caves and crevices that held Japanese. Flames were used to drive the Japanese from their lairs, and Willis and his buddy shot them down. Other Marines followed and emptied clips into the bodies of the Japanese, as if one killing were not enough. Finally, Ralph and his buddy reached a bluff overlooking the ocean at the other end of the island. The buddy sat down on the bluff, looked out into the ocean, and casually pegged a rock into the sea. Looking terribly forlorn, he turned to Willis and said dejectedly, "Shit, Ralph, we're out of Japs." For what the Japanese had done from Pearl Harbor forward, the Marines could not kill enough of them. The great Adm. Bull Halsey, just days before the atomic bombs, sent emergency requests throughout the Pacific for fuel and ammunition for his fleet. When asked what he intended to do, the Bull replied, "I want to hit the Japs one more time—before they quit."

Perhaps a more egregious misrepresentation of history is the movie's claim, spoken dramatically by a narrator, that, by the time of the invasion of Iwo Jima, the war had gone on for too long, people were demoralized, the nation was bankrupt. I cannot help but think that this is an allusion to the conflict in Iraq superimposed over the war in the Pacific. For the record, by the late winter and early spring of 1945, every American knew that Germany was on the verge of collapse and that we were one or two islands from Japan herself. American morale was sky high, the economy was booming, and rationing was ending. War bonds were still

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selling like hotcakes.

For those of you who have not read *Flags of Our Fathers*, do so immediately. You will want to keep it on your library shelf and read it again at a later date. For those of you who did not seen the movie, wait for the DVD and rent it. Problems aside, it is worth seeing once.

Corresponding editor Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.

AMERICAN EMPIRE

Lincoln, the Leiber Code, and Total War

by Joseph E. Fallon

The American Civil War was an unparalleled tragedy for the United States and the world. For it ensured that, thereafter, civilians everywhere were treated as "legitimate" targets in time of war.

As in all wars, the victor wrote the official history of the conflict to extol its virtue and to demonize its opponent. Unlike in earlier wars, however, the victorious North also exonerated its conduct by successfully rewriting international law governing warfare. This was achieved through the adoption of the Leiber Code, which declared total war—the deliberate targeting of civilians, women and children, the sick and the elderly—"lawful," even justifiable on "humanitarian" grounds. The Leiber Code was a repudiation of our civilization's traditional rules of engagement, developed over the previous millennium, which limited the scope of war and protected the life, liberty, and property of civilians.

Lincoln's strategy was to defeat the Confederacy by targeting Southern civilians. One of his first acts of war was to order a blockade of Southern ports on April 19, 1861, to deny food and medicine, among other items, to civilians. Because such acts violated traditional U.S. military rules of conduct, Lincoln needed a new code to justify this behavior. So he commissioned Francis Leiber, a prominent Northern attorney and scholar, and a former advisor to Otto von Bismarck, to write it.

Leiber was the perfect choice. The Prussian immigrant was contemptuous of the Constitution. He dismissed the federal order it had established as a union of "confederacies of petty sovereigns" based on the "obsolete ideas" of Thomas Jefferson. He shared Lincoln's drive to centralize political power in the executive branch. Together, they alleged that, in wartime, implied powers in the Constitution grant the president authority to enact legislation as well as to interpret the Constitution—to deny or suspend constitutional rights as the chief executive sees fit.

The new military code Leiber produced was entitled "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field." A catalogue of 157 rules, it was promulgated by Lincoln on April 24, 1863, as "General Orders No. 100." The code had two functions. First, it provided the needed "rules" to justify Lincoln's conduct of the war. Second, it further consolidated power in the office of the president by usurping key constitutional prerogatives of Congress.

According to Article l, Section 8, of the Constitution, only Congress can "make laws for the Government and Regulation of land and naval Forces," and only Congress can "provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States." Lincoln had already usurped the powers to declare war and to suspend *habeas corpus*—powers also reserved to Congress.

Of his "Instructions," Leiber claimed at the time that "nothing of the kind exists in any language. I had no guide, no ground-work, no text-book." This assertion is championed by many of his admirers, including PBS. A section of its website devoted to the documentary *Berga: Soldiers of Another War* includes a resource page entitled "POWs and the Laws of War," which states,

> The Lieber Code broke new ground in dictating military conduct during warfare. Principally, it created a clear distinction between permissible conduct towards combatants . . . and non-combatants. Non-combatants—the civilian population—were to receive fundamentally different treatment during armed conflict, including protection from the conflict.

Both claims are false. Rules on warfare existed in Greek, Latin, and French. They are derived from the works of Aristotle and Cicero. The proper legal and moral grounds for going to war and how to conduct war, including proportionality and noncombatant immunity, had been extensively described in the writings of Augustine, Aquinas, Grotius, Suarez, Vattel, and Vitoria.

These writings formed the legal foundation for national ordinances and bilateral treaties, which became increasingly more comprehensive in their scope and together constituted what became customary international law on warfare. Among such early laws were "Constitutions to be Made in the Army of our Lord the King," by King John (1214); the Durham Ordinances of War, by King Richard II (1385); the Mantes Ordinances of War, by King Henry V (1419); and "Prevent Pillage and Abuses by Soldiers," by King Charles VII (1439).

Until the Leiber Code, the preeminent legal authority on war for the government and the military of the United States was Emmerich de Vattel's *Law of Nations* (1758), which declared:

> Women, children, feeble old men, and sick persons, come under the description of enemies; and we have certain rights over them, inasmuch as they belong to the nation with whom we are at war . . . But these are enemies who make no resistance; and consequently we have no right to maltreat their persons or use any violence against them, much less to take away their lives. This is so plain a maxim of justice and humanity, that at present every nation in the least degree civilized, acquiesces in it. . . .

Vattel continues,

> At present, war is carried on by regular troops: the people, the peasants, the citizens, take no part in it, and generally have nothing to fear from the sword of the enemy. Provided the inhabitants submit to him who is master of the country, pay the contributions imposed, and refrain from all hostilities, they live in as perfect safety as if they were friends: they even continue in possession of what belongs to them: the country people come freely to the camp to sell their provisions, and are protected, as far as possible, from the calamities of war.

In his book *International Law, or, Rules Regulating the Intercourse of States in Peace*

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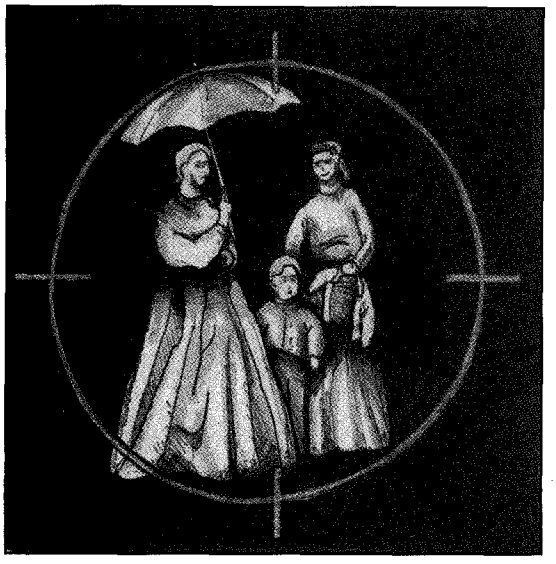

Nicholas Garrie

and War (1861), used by the faculty of West Point in the classroom, America's leading expert in the field, Gen. Henry W. Halleck, reaffirmed Vattel's legal opinions.

But customary international law was overthrown by the Leiber Code's advocacy of total war based on "military necessity." Article 15 of the Leiber Code states that

> Military necessity admits of all direct destruction of life or limb of armed enemies, and of other persons whose destruction is incidentally unavoidable in the armed contests of the war; it allows of the capturing of every armed enemy, and every enemy of importance to the hostile government, or of peculiar danger to the captor; it allows of all destruction of property, and obstruction of the ways and channels of traffic, travel, or communication, and of all withholding of sustenance or means of life from the enemy; of the appropriation of whatever an enemy's country affords necessary for the subsistence and safety of the army . . .

To justify total-war tactics, Article 29 claims that, "The more vigorously wars are pursued, the better it is for humanity. Sharp wars are brief."

In place of Vattel's "maxim of justice and humanity," the Leiber Code declared (Article 17) that "It is lawful to starve the hostile belligerent, armed or unarmed, so that it leads to the speedier subjection of the enemy." In addition,

> When a commander of a besieged place expels the noncombatants, in order to lessen the number of those who consume his stock of provisions, it is lawful, though an extreme measure, to drive them back, so as to hasten on the surrender [Article 18].
>
> Commanders, whenever admissible, inform the enemy of their intention to bombard a place, so that the noncombatants, and especially the women and children, may be removed before the bombardment commences. But it is no infraction of the common law of war to omit thus to inform the enemy. Surprise may be a necessity [Article 19].
>
> The citizen or native of a hostile country is thus an enemy, as one of the constituents of the hostile state or nation, and as such is subjected to the hardships of the war [Article 21].
>
> . . . The principle has been more and more acknowledged that the unarmed citizen is to be spared in person, property, and honor as much as the exigencies of war will admit [from Article 22].
>
> The law of war can no more wholly dispense with retaliation than can the law of nations, of which it is a branch [Article 27].
>
> . . . No body of troops has the right to declare that it will not give, and therefore will not expect, quarter; but a commander is permitted to direct his troops to give no quarter, in great straits, when his own salvation makes it impossible to cumber himself with prisoners [from Article 60].

The Leiber Code schizophrenically claims to promote humanitarian principles while deliberately undermining them with qualifications and obfuscations. For instance, Article 16 states, "Military necessity does not admit of cruelty—that is, the infliction of suffering for the sake of suffering or for revenge . . . " This implies the infliction of suffering is permitted for other reasons.

Article 38 proclaims, "Private property, unless forfeited by crimes or by offenses of the owner, can be seized only by way of military necessity, for the support or other benefit of the army or of the United States." Since *military necessity* is effectively defined by the whim of the commander in the field, there is, in fact, no protection for private property.

In Article 44, Leiber decrees that "all destruction of property not commanded by the authorized officer" is "prohibited under the penalty of death." Therefore, destruction of any and all property is lawful, as long as it is "commanded by the authorized officer."

Excerpts from two letters written in 1864—one, by General Sherman; the other, by General Sheridan—bear witness to the reality of the Leiber Code. Sherman ordered a subordinate to "burn ten or twelve houses" and "kill a few at random," and "let them know that it will be repeated every time a train is fired upon." Sheridan, in turn, wrote to Grant that his troops, whom he described as "barn burners" and "destroyers of homes," had already "destroyed over 2200 barns . . . over 70 mills . . . have driven in front of the army over 4000 head of stock, and have killed . . . not less than 3000 sheep. . . Tomorrow I will continue the destruction."

It is sad that the statesmen who signed the Declaration of Independence and authored the Constitution and the *Federalist* were succeeded by the politicians who created and promulgated the Leiber Code. And it is alarming that the concepts propounded therein remain acceptable under international law. As long as they are, no civilians are safe from the terrors of "military necessity" and total war.

Joseph E. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Kosovo in the Crosshairs

by James Bissett

Serbian voters have approved a new constitution that, among other things, reaffirms Serbian sovereignty over Kosovo, which, since the NATO bombing of 1999, has been administered by the United Nations with the help of NATO troops. The referendum's passage will further complicate the efforts of Western policymakers to grant independence to Kosovo since to do so without Serbia's consent would violate the U.N. Charter's protection of territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders. Nevertheless, there have been indications that U.N. Special Envoy Marrti Ahtisaari will rec-

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ommend before the year is out that Kosovo be separated from Serbia and become an independent country. This would be a mistake.

For the past seven years, Kosovo, under U.N. administration, has become one of the most dangerous places on earth. It is the center of heroin, weapons, and human trafficking into Western Europe. Murder and abduction of non–Albanians occur daily. Civil society is nonexistent, and living standards are equivalent to those of Haiti. More alarmingly, there is evidence that Islamic extremists with Al Qaeda connections are a growing presence there. Kosovo has all of the characteristics of a failed state, and, of all the people in the world striving for independent status, the Albanians in Kosovo must rank among the least deserving.

Under the watchful eyes of U.N. and NATO authorities, over 200,000 Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, and other non-Albanians have been expelled from Kosovo. Those who remain are in constant danger. Some of those encouraged by the United Nations to return have been murdered. Kosovo's prime minister, Agim Çeku, is an indicted war criminal. Though ethnically Albanian, he led the Croatian forces in 1993 who overran Serbian villages protected by Canadian peacekeepers. When his troops were driven out, the Canadians found all of the civilians and their animals had been slaughtered. Later, Çeku inflicted widespread carnage by ordering his artillery to fire on Serb civilians fleeing from their ancestral lands in Croatia.

One of the most shocking crimes committed by the Albanian majority in Kosovo has been the deliberate destruction of over 150 Christian churches and monasteries. The ruin of these ancient churches, many of them dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries, has been part of a calculated effort to remove all semblance of Christian heritage in Kosovo. Meanwhile, 400 new mosques—financed openly by Wahabi money from Saudi Arabia—have been constructed.

There has been no outrage by the "international community" at the destruction of these Christian holy places, no serious attempt to apprehend the perpetrators, and no expression of alarm or protest on the part of Christian churches in the West. It is another striking example of the double standard applied when Muslim outrages against nonbelievers are tolerated without complaint, while cartoons or imagined insults to Islam cause widespread rioting and demands for apologies.

U.N. Resolution 1244, which ended the bombing campaign against Serbia, guaranteed that Kosovo would have a functioning civil society, democratic institutions, security for all citizens, and respect for the rule of law. It called for the disarming of the Kosovo Liberation Army and other militias. It provided for the return to Kosovo of limited numbers of Serbian security forces to guard the Christian holy places. And it reasserted Serbia's sovereignty over Kosovo.

Sadly, it seems the United Nations and NATO had no intention of honoring these commitments. These are hard facts, and they stand as a testimony of failure. The performance of these two international institutions has been marked by duplicity, double standards, and cowardice.

Granting Kosovo independence would establish a dangerous precedent, with far-reaching implications for all those around the globe who are striving for their own statehood. Russian President Vladimir Putin has already warned that such a decision would be applicable to post-Soviet territory. Currently, the most volatile regions are the Georgian provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which broke away from Georgia in 1992 and have been seeking independent status. Recognition of Kosovo independence would provide Abkhazia and South Ossetia with the precedent needed to demand equal treatment. This could result in violence and bloodshed, with serious implications for world security.

Otto von Bismarck once remarked that the Balkans were not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier. Yet he also predicted that, if there was to be another war in Europe, it would be because of some "damned silly thing" in the Balkans. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, sparking off World War I, proved him right. Ominously, there is a strong possibility that another "damned silly thing" is taking place in the Balkans: the seeming determination of Western policymakers to grant the Serbian province of Kosovo independence. In foreign policy as in other human endeavors, you can't get good results if you do dumb things.

James Bissett served as Canadian ambassador to Yugoslavia. A shorter, edited version of this article appeared in the Toronto Globe and Mail *on October 31, 2006.*

JOBS

The Education Mantra

by Gerald Russello

Back in October, Democrats and Republicans, following the release of the nation's employment numbers by the U.S. Department of Labor, retreated into their usual preelection fantasia. Democrats trotted out the class-warfare tropes, while Republicans continued living in their dreamworld, where increased employment in the service industry—such as insurance companies and doctors' offices—can make up for drops in manufacturing and housing-construction jobs.

A set of articles featured in the *New York Times* editorial pages over Labor Day weekend told a more substantial story and focused on economic indicators concerning the changing—and decreasing—status of the American worker. Collectively, they show that, whatever the merits of "conservative" control of Congress or the governors' mansions in the more than two decades since the advent of the Reagan years, the plight of the American worker has only worsened.

Consider some of the findings: People are working longer and later in life, even as a younger generation cannot find jobs appropriate for their overeducated and privileged selves. Today, government workers are better compensated than private-sector workers, and the average salary of the counties around Washington, D.C., has grown sharply, thanks to the explosive growth of government in recent years and, especially, to the "War on Terror." Individually and collectively, we are head over heels in debt, a condition that affects the working and middle classes more harshly than the rich. Unions have been devastated, having been largely reduced to negotiating how much of their wages and salaries to give away lest they see their jobs outsourced to more compliant "national regulatory regimes."

And then there is immigration. The flood of low-paid workers, on the one hand, and highly skilled transnational transplants, on the other, continues to squeeze middle-class Americans (except, of course, those on the government-salary dole).

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Solutions from the usual suspects are almost nonexistent. Liberals wonder why no one talks about good old-fashioned income redistribution anymore, ignoring the cultural degradation that comes with liberalism that many Americans, even now, disdain, recognizing that liberal economic policy mostly means taking from me to give to thee. Conservatives, meanwhile, their faces frozen in a rictus from praising globalization, continue to sing paeans to postindustrial capitalism, not noticing (or caring) that the only jobs that will remain for Americans are those reserved for empty talking heads or think-tank chairs endowed by service- or financial-sector robber barons.

This is all familiar, of course, nauseatingly so, and was anticipated by thinkers as varied as Christopher Lasch and Wendell Berry. The chattering classes are obsessed with the revenue and income numbers of faceless corporate entities, who care no more for their workers than they do for their country. Pushed by the new darlings of global finance, such as private equity firms, companies make decisions based almost completely on the next quarter's revenues and profit for shareholders; long-term value to actual American communities has largely fallen out of consideration.

Meanwhile, *New York Times*-approved conservatives such as David Brooks prattle on about human capital, as if people were widgets to be fitted for their holes holding up the capitalist edifice. Even such august thinkers as the late Milton Friedman have bought into the fantasy that "education" is the solution to wage stagnation and increasing income inequality. In a recent editorial, Irwin Stelzer—who, to his credit, recognizes the impact of immigration and concedes that recent studies have shown that social class is becoming the primary predictor of success for one's offspring—writes that the American worker just needs to be provided with additional two-year junior-college and "apprenticeship" programs, and all will be well.

We have been sold this pack of lies before. No doubt legions of factory workers can talk about the "retraining" buzz a few years back; a lot of good that did for those who caught the buzz, became computer programmers, then saw those jobs shipped overseas to people willing to work at a fraction of what it costs to maintain Brooks' Bobo lifestyle. Does anyone actually believe that there are jobs for which Americans can be "educated" that workers in Russia, India, China, or a dozen other places cannot be? What the education mantra proposes is an endless race to the next new thing; for those who are left behind, too bad. This is not an economic policy but a talking point for those who want fodder for the next generation and to hide the fact that America is in danger of becoming a Third World oligopoly.

The future, however, is already here. Those same corporate executives and financial firms seeking "value" across the globe are seeing a mirror of their industry grow in India and other places that have decided it would be better to have their own capital spent at home than to water Greenwich golf courses or pay for plasma-television screens in Silicon Valley. When that trend hits full speed, talk of capitalism's creative destruction will disappear faster than you can say "protectionism."

Gerald J. Russello is the editor of the University Bookman.

THE ECONOMY

Wal-Mart and the Homosexuals

by R. Cort Kirkwood

Just before Election Day, the *Washington Post*'s website featured a photo of President Bush landing in Bentonville, Arkansas, for a campaign stop. Why Bush thought going to Bentonville would help pachyderm prospects, we are not given to know, but we do know that Bush and the town's most notorious corporate resident, Wal-Mart, are helping another group: homosexuals.

Americans recently witnessed the depressing and revolting photograph of Secretary of State Condi Rice swearing in the plutocracy's new global AIDS chieftain, Mark Dybul. He is "openly gay," as the patois puts it, and his "partner" held the Bible for him. "As first lady Laura Bush looked on," *USA Today* reported, "Rice singled out his partner, Jason Claire, and Claire's mother. Rice referred to her as Dybul's 'mother-in-law.'" This is why the GOP is known in some quarters as the "Gay Old Party." In addition to defrocked Rep. Mark Foley of Florida, Republican poofters abound, not least of whom, the professional outers say, are top Republican officials.

This is bad enough. But let's not forget Bentonville's big banana, Wal-Mart, the planet's largest purveyor of Chinese-made junk. As I recently reported in these pages (*Cultural Revolutions*, November), Wal-Mart's fans and haters love it and loathe it for the same reason: low wages, high profits. Wal-Mart provides other reasons to complain about its corporate policies, not least of which is its subversion of American sovereignty by subsidizing leftist organizations that promote illegal immigration. And now, we learn, Wal-Mart wants to undermine the American family and culture by supporting buggery.

In August, as widely reported, Wal-Mart ponied up $25,000 to join an outfit you've probably never heard of: the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. (You can imagine what this "chamber of commerce" does.) One of Wal-Mart's vice presidents will be an advisor to the chamber, according to *SaveWalMart.com*, and the company will sponsor some of the chamber's programs. So firm is Wal-Mart's embrace of homosexuals that it has fostered the same symbiotic relationship with Washington, D.C.'s Community Center for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender People as it has with Christian organizations. Five percent of Wal-Mart's sales made through the group's website go to the gays, lesbians, switch-hitters, and *its*. It's a small sum, but what matters is the principle behind the link. On another front in the war against the family, Wal-Mart is selling the "Plan B" abortion pill.

Groups such as SaveWalMart.com (affiliated with Operation Rescue/Operation Save America), the American Family Association, the Culture and Family Institute, and the Family Research Council have taken note of Wal-Mart's pro-homosexual hijinks, and the first two called for boycotting the store on the busiest shopping days of the year, the Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving. The AFA pulled out of the boycott at the last minute after Wal-Mart claimed that it "does not have a position on same sex marriage and we do not give preference to gay or lesbian suppliers." Wal-Mart also announced that it will "not make corporate contributions to support or oppose highly controversial issues unless they directly relate to our ability to serve our customers." Who knows where this leaves the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.

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Not surprisingly, some Wal-Mart employees have quit over the company's burgeoning infatuation with the Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name. But at least they're walking out the automatic double doors on their own volition. Some of America's largest corporations fire employees who buck the pro-sodomite line. In the sodomy business, that's called "gay friendly." In the corporate human-resources business, it's called "supporting diversity."

As *WorldNetDaily.com* has reported, Kodak canned an employee of 23 years because he objected to the company touting the Human Rights Campaign's "Coming Out Day." The Human Rights Campaign, for the blissfully ignorant, is a homosexual lobby group. One of the ten best places for lesbians to work, according to the sapphic magazine *Girlfriends*, Kodak sent a memo to 1,000 employees containing a ten-point compendium of advice on "respecting" sodomite coworkers. The 23-year company veteran replied to the memo, asking not to be sent any more such e-mails, because "I find it disgusting and offensive." Kodak fired him.

The insurance giant Allstate ("the good-hands people"), a donor to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation and the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, fired an employee, the employee alleges, for writing "offensive" opinions on websites: He committed the sin of denouncing same-sex "marriage."

Corporate America has a passion for perverts. The list of "gay-friendlies" includes such titans of capitalism as Aetna, American Airlines, AT&T, Citigroup, Dell, IBM, Motorola, PepsiCo, Sprint Nextel, Volkswagen, Whirlpool, and Xerox. Anheuser-Busch sponsored the "Gay Rodeo," which raises the question of whether it will begin brewing "Brokeback Beer"—but, in any event, the whole gay-friendly gaggle can be Googled at gay-friendly Google in five seconds. All these companies earned perfect-100 scores on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index.

None of this, of course, bothers the hard-core capitalist, the libertarian or conservative who thinks Wal-Mart is the zenith of American commerce and culture. When *Chronicles* took note of Wal-Mart's open-borders philanthropy, one top libertarian replied that Wal-Mart "is guilty of nothing other than making a profit by selling stuff that people want at prices that people can afford." And besides, he wrote, "Wal-Mart's giving is all over the political map."

Translation? Profits rule. "Always low prices" is all that matters. To hell with the border. To hell with America. Consumers of the World, Unite!

It's hardly a leap to conclude that this same individual, who thinks the government should permit homosexuals to adopt children and that mothers "own . . . parenting rights" (which they can sell), may think likewise of Wal-Mart's funding of sodomy and perversion: "It is guilty of nothing other than making a profit by selling stuff that people want at prices that people can afford." Those opposing Wal-Mart's anti-American, anti-family shenanigans, in his view, are "nationalists" and "socialists." How subtle.

Given this *ad hominem* attack, one might well ask what you should call someone who approves Wal-Mart's bankrolling La Raza and celebration of anal rutting and coprophilia. Those who defend Wal-Mart, regardless of its policies, are precisely what is wrong with America, in general, and the American right, in particular.

For the deracinated Wal-Mart libertarian, anything goes when it comes to private property and business. If Wal-Mart subsidizes illegal immigration, well, it needs workers and customers. If Wal-Mart subsidizes homosexuals, well, it needs workers and customers. If a company fires a hundred American citizens to hire a hundred illegal immigrants, or fires another hundred who don't want a farrago of fairy propaganda e-mailed to their desks, well, the bottom line is what counts. Private-property rights are inviolable. Period.

Intelligent conservatives know precisely where this theory, ultimately rooted in the profoundly evil, anti-Christian ideology of "self-ownership," winds up. In the abortuary down the street. In the porn shop on your corner. In the "gay" bathhouse next to your bank.

Yet the libertarians' own theory of "nonaggression"—that one man may never initiate violence against another—trumps Wal-Mart's "property right" to subsidize illegal immigration because it wants to, or because its philanthropy "is all over the political map." Illegal immigrants do violence to American sovereignty and to citizens by border jumping, fraudulent voting, welfare theft, and violent crime. And Wal-Mart doesn't have the right to proselytize buggery, which does spiritual violence to marriage and family—at least not without provoking the vitriolic criticism it richly deserves. No one has the "right" to support sedition and sin. If the law and libertarians say Wal-Mart has a legal right to its policies, so be it. The rest of us have the moral duty to stop it.

But back to Bush. Consider the story of David Kuo, ex-deputy chief of the ballyhooed Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives, which tithes religious groups with tax money. The author of *Tempting Faith*, the tale of his time in that job, Kuo nailed the problem with Bush and the Gay Old Party. The Bush Bund, he avers, put the bow to the evangelical violin. When the evangelicals weren't looking, however, the Bush crew rolled their eyes and called them "nuts" and "goofy." That's what most Americans would say about companies that deify deviance. Of course, Bush is the one who is "nuts" and "goofy." So he's right at home in Bentonville.

R. Cort Kirkwood is the author of Real Men: Ten Courageous Americans to Know and Admire *(Cumberland House).*

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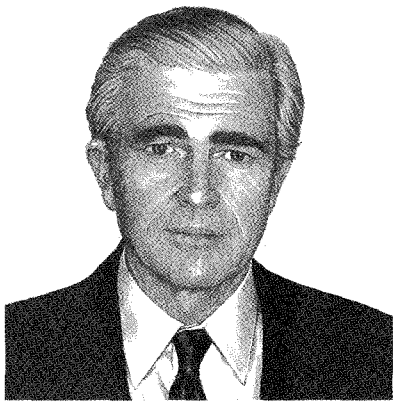
by George McCartney

Cross-Cultural Follies



Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan

Produced by Everyman Pictures
Directed by Larry Charles
Screenplay by Sacha Baron Cohen, Anthony Hines, Peter Baynham, and Dan Mazer
Distributed by 20th Century Fox

Babel

Produced by Anonymous Content and Zeta Film
Directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu
Screenplay by Guillermo Arriaga
Distributed by Paramount Vantage

Sacha Baron Cohen is an investor's dream. His movie, *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*, is reaping a return of Midas proportions at the multiplexes. Everything the film mockingly touches—hopeless poverty, inveterate misogyny, sexual degradation, lethal tribalism, even animal cruelty—has turned to pure gold. *Borat*, America's number-one movie as I write one week after its release, has already raked in a cool $68 million. Not bad, considering it cost $18 million to make.

I congratulate Cohen, but I feel bound to warn him there's danger ahead. A *fatwa* will surely be hurled at his gourd-shaped head any day now. Whether through bravery or foolishness, he has courted the wrath of Muslims in high places. His film flaunts an exceedingly provocative premise. Cohen pretends to be Borat, a television journalist from Kazakhstan who comes to America on a mission to bring some Yankee know-how to his impoverished, backward homeland. He especially wants to know how Americans handle their Jews. For, as he explains in his Kazak-inflected English, "although Kazakhstan a glorious country, it have a problem, too: economic, social, and Jew." This is tricky business. Borat's faith is never explicitly identified, but the cards are clearly stacked. Kazakhstan is 47-percent Sunni Muslim, which is the religion of her president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has ruled continuously—and, of course, democratically—since the 1990 Soviet implosion. Her broadcast stations are either owned outright or monitored closely by the state media bureau, run by Nazarbayev's daughter. Thus, a high-ranking newscaster such as Borat would almost certainly be Muslim. So we have an English Jewish actor playing a Muslim who hates Jews. This was bound to rub some sensitive souls the wrong way, especially since it is painfully clear that Borat hasn't a particle of *jihadi* sense. During his American road trip, he stops at a Texas gun shop and asks the proprietor what kind of bullets are best for killing Jews. The untroubled merchant blandly recommends the preferred caliber for the task. Unfortunately, Borat can't make the purchase. He is traveling on a journalist's visa and isn't licensed to kill. The jihadist community will surely be insulted by the spectacle of one of their fellows so lacking in the craft of militant deception.

Borat shames his fellow *jihadis* in other ways. Although he displays a becoming sense of sex privilege—he addresses feminists as "pussycats" and guffaws incredulously upon learning that American women are permitted to choose their sexual partners—his sense of family honor is decidedly deficient. In the faux documentary that opens the film, he takes his American audience on a tour of his squalid village. At one point, he steps up to a plump blonde and greets her with a long, passionate kiss, then introduces the giggling girl as his sister, "the number-four prostitute in whole of Kazakhstan."

Cohen's film extends the shtick he created for BBC 4's *Da Ali G Show*. The witless and ever-horny Borat talks tirelessly to everyone he meets but learns nothing for his troubles. He remains hopelessly naive, never realizing that people are offended by his importunate vulgarity. In assuming the role of Borat, Cohen sets out to interview people without letting them in on the gag. Then, when they go on camera, he sandbags them with his faux innocence. While I suspect some of the interviews are staged, others clearly are not. When Borat chats with perennial presidential candidate Alan Keyes—a "genuine chocolate face"—he inquires about some strange, scantily clad men he recently met at a Washington, D.C., parade. "They wanted to take a shower with me," he confides. Keyes looks a bit uncomfortable but finally suggests that the fellows were probably members of "the gay community" in town for a gay-pride celebration. Borat looks puzzled for a few seconds. "Are you telling me," he finally gasps, "that the man who tried to put a rubber fist into my anus was a homosexual?" Keyes glances sideways at the camera, his face carefully noncommittal. He realizes he's been had.

At a rodeo in Texas, Borat, taking note of the cowboys' flamboyant shirts, tells the unsuspecting owner that, in Kazakhstan, they kill homosexuals. The owner replies, "We're trying to do that here also." Changing the subject, this gentleman tells Borat he should shave off his mustache. This way, instead of looking like a Muslim, he'd be taken for an "Eyetalian." Brought before the audience as the rodeo's guest of honor, he gives an address in which he congratulates the people on "your war of terror" and assures them he would like nothing better than to see George Bush "drink the blood of every man, woman, and child in Iraq." With only a smidgeon of uncertainty, the people applaud these sentiments.

Such encounters are the cultural learnings of the film's subtitle. We are to understand that the people Borat meets are homophobes, racists, hypocrites, and worse. By comparison, Borat's political incorrectness is merely an accident of having been brought up in a woefully backward country. And, by extension, Cohen is just having a bit of vulgar fun with cross-cultural misunderstandings.

I'm not buying it. The laughs this crass movie provokes leave a sour aftertaste. There's an underlying meanness of spirit informing almost every frame. Cohen's contempt for the ordinary people he's

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lured into his project is palpable. He takes advantage of their innate civility. Recent reports confirm this. Consider, for instance, the folks in Glod, Rumania, the village Cohen used to simulate Borat's Kazakhstan home. They have mounted a lawsuit alleging the film's producers told them the movie was going to be a documentary about their economic troubles. Instead, they were tricked into acting like buffoons who regularly share their homes with their livestock. Furthermore, the producers refused to sign any contracts and paid the villagers a pittance for their contributions. Another lawsuit, filed by two University of South Carolina students, claims the producers got the students drunk, then urged them to engage in crude and racist banter on camera. Cohen, we're told, is a Cambridge alumnus whose undergraduate thesis concerned the role Jews played in America's civil-rights movement. What about his dupes? Have they no civil rights?

Mexican director Alejandro González Iñárritu also wants to impart cultural learnings. Unfortunately, what he has to say in *Babel* is less interesting than how he says it.

Iñárritu makes brilliant use of a cinematic style dating back to Russian director Sergei Eisenstein. In the 1920's, Eisenstein declared montage to be nothing less than Karl Marx's historical dialectic in cinematic action. One shot properly spliced to another creates a "collision of ideas" that endeavors an illuminating Hegelian synthesis. His 1929 film *Strike* includes a frankly propagandistic sequence in which police beat demonstrating workers into submission, followed by a shot of a bull being butchered. The two images have no relation in time and space. However, when seen in sequence, they inescapably imply the workers are being treated with all the mercy accorded cattle.

Iñárritu, too, specializes in colliding montages of discontinuous images designed to provoke his audience into reassessing what they think they know about the world. *Babel* opens in a Moroccan desert village, where a Bedouin sells a high-powered rifle to a goatherd who then foolishly gives the weapon to his young sons, instructing them to kill the jackals that are depleting his livestock. An instant later, we're in an upscale kitchen in San Diego, where a Mexican nanny named Amelia (Adriana Barraza) is talking on the phone to her American boss, Richard (Brad Pitt), who is demanding she stay with his two young children, Debbie and Mike, longer than scheduled. But she has plans to attend her son's wedding in Tijuana. Richard pleads that this is an emergency. Before we learn what's wrong, we're in Tokyo watching a deaf-mute high-school girl headed toward an emotional breakdown. In the wake of her mother's suicide, Chieko (Rinko Kikuchi) longs for consolation. Thinking romance might solve her problems, she tries to attract the boys she notices watching her from afar. Upon discovering her affliction at closer quarters, however, the young men invariably recoil. Regarded as a monster, she begins to act accordingly. She flirts monstrously with her dentist by licking his mouth as he examines her teeth. Later, she exposes her pubic hair to some boys in a discotheque. Although Chieko has but the barest connection to the other narratives, she's clearly meant to be the living symbol of our general ineptitude at communicating sensibly with one another.

In each of these scenes, the camera watches the characters in extreme close-up, limiting the visual field so that we're uncertain about the larger context. To add to our confusion, events are shuffled back and forth in time without any apparent pattern. All this leaves the viewer wondering where the film is going; so you watch the unreeling events, expecting they will make sense sooner or later. Then, after about 30 minutes, you realize you're being hurled into a multicultural hall of justice to witness Americans arraigned on charges of being callously indifferent to their less-fortunate Third World cousins. Needless to say, those cousins prove to be noble and long-suffering, displaying exemplary restraint in the face of our bad behavior.

The dots begin to connect when the Moroccan boys shoot at a tourist bus winding along the mountain road far below them. They think the bullet too "lame" to reach it. But it does, wounding Richard's wife, Susan (Cate Blanchett). The nearest hospital is over four hours away, and Susan will bleed to death before they can reach it. Anwar (Mohamed Akhzam), a kindly Moroccan, offers to take Susan to his village, and Richard accepts. But when they arrive, Richard grows alarmed. Anwar's village seems a primitive outpost. The practice of its single doctor includes livestock as well as humans. Enraged, Richard pounds on Anwar's chest, screaming at him and the other Moroccans, demanding they locate an ambulance, contact the American embassy, do something. Instead of striking back, Anwar continues to try to soothe this distressed American. Meanwhile, the shooting has achieved international notoriety. American officials surmise it must be terrorism. Soon, anxious Moroccan authorities begin brutally abusing the locals to try to get the truth.

Back in San Diego, Amelia is preparing to take Debbie and Mike to Tijuana. As they drive south, Debbie expresses dismay: "My mother tells me Mexico is very dangerous."

The driver, Amelia's nephew, smiles warmly: "Yes, it's full of Mexicans." But it is Americans, not Mexicans, who present the danger. The kids have a wonderful time at the wedding. Upon their return to San Diego, however, Amelia is questioned by imperious border guards. Why, they demand, are there two Anglo children in the back seat? After a series of misunderstandings, Amelia finds herself abandoned by her frightened nephew and lost in the desert with the children.

By this point, I was thoroughly hooked. How was Iñárritu going to resolve this colliding montage? When I found out, however, I was disappointed. The film, finally, is little more than a reductive lesson in multiculturalism. First Worlders must come down from their Tower of Babel and listen to their less-fortunate siblings. But how much more understanding and tolerant can we become without giving the store away? Besides, who's responsible for what? For instance, Iñárritu portrays our border guards as unfeeling brutes but says nothing against the Mexican government that encourages its people to risk their lives sneaking into the United States. Like Eisenstein, Iñárritu wields montage for propagandistic purposes, but he's not quite as frank about it.

Politics aside, there's no denying Iñárritu's artistry. Consider the scenes with which he frames the film. The first reveals a parched Moroccan village at dawn, looking as it would have many thousands of years ago. The last is a shot of a Tokyo glass apartment tower at night, its reflecting surfaces dizzily winking back the blizzard of neon signs illuminating the impossibly crowded city—an Eisensteinian visual collision. And the synthesis? Perhaps it's best formulated as a question: If we have come so far, why are we still deaf to one another's needs? Fair enough, but one wishes this wholly unsurprising accusation were leveled more impartially. ◁

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

La Dame aux Camélias

"I am convinced that the fate of France is sealed," Jean Raspail wrote three years ago in *Le Figaro*. "The deed is done." Strolling down Rue de Mogador toward the Place de l'Opéra in Paris on a bright September morning with a copy of that paper rolled under my arm, I found Raspail's words close to incredible, a dark illusion. Yet the illusion that the prophecy is an illusion is the principal reason why its realization is a virtual certainty. That same evening, one of France's keenest minds, most discerning intellects, and uncompromising voices confirmed Raspail's prophecy as we drank champagne at twilight in his flat on the Left Bank with a view toward the brooding *banlieues* of Africa on the city's perimeter. In the spring of 2006, *haute couture* became *couture carnage*—Moorish headwraps and tunics stained with splashes of red expressing a macabre sense of popular humor recalling that of Paris during the Reign of Terror.

And yet, the illusory has a reality of its own, like the artistic creation that it is. Paris is so lovely! Rome is the universal as well as the Eternal City, an endless arrangement of labyrinths arrayed vertically in descending layers that seem to approach the center of the earth. Rome has infinite variety, infinite complexity, deepening shades of mystery as impenetrable by reason as the Faith Itself. And Rome has grandeur, too, and the amassed, overwhelming, nearly alarming beauty of piled civilizations threatening to topple over or, more likely, sink even deeper into the earth beneath their unfathomable weight. Its beauty is that of the Old Jerusalem. But Paris's beauty is a more uniform beauty that shines with the refulgence of the Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem. Paris is the Perfect City. To behold Paris is to understand what Beauty looks like, and to experience it is to learn how Beauty feels.

It was a rather grand outing we were making—a trip to France over a long weekend to attend a birthday party thrown for a dear friend from college, and for a decade after in Manhattan, by his family in celebration of his 60th birthday. I had not laid eyes on Stephen and Catherine Pierce for 30 years, since they moved from New York in the late 70's to Paris, where Stephen continued to work for J.P. Morgan while Catherine, a Frenchwoman, pursued a brilliant career in administrative law. (She was the presiding judge in the Alain Jupe case several years ago that nearly brought down Jacques Chirac's government.) In that time, the Pierces had reared three children, now grown to adulthood. Only a previously scheduled visit to Rome a year earlier had prevented us from flying to Biarritz instead for Pauline's wedding. On this occasion, Maureen and I had booked a room at the New Orient Hotel on Rue de Constantinople, around the corner from the Pierces' flat on Rue de Copenhague, in the 8e Arrondissement. We checked in at 10:30 on a humid, overcast Saturday morning after the taxi ride from De Gaulle and threw open the tall windows onto the Paris street beyond the potted begonias and the glass-and-iron fan spread above the hotel entrance. Workmen were jack-hammering the pavement to get at the waterline beneath, but, in the relative silences between the mechanical blasts, we could hear the sounds of women's heels along the sidewalk and snatches of conversations in the native tongue. French is not so beautiful a language as Italian, but it has greater dash, making it a greater pleasure to speak (if one doesn't have much Italian, especially).

I had last visited Paris in 1972 where, after several nights in a cheap hotel, I met up with Stephen at his parents' flat on the Quai d'Orsay, and we began a trip by car together through the Loire Valley. That had been a fine visit, too, yet my impressions of Paris were distinctly mixed. The city had struck me as somewhat dirty; the *hôtelière* had attempted to cheat me in the amount of several times what I owed her (and pretended it was an accident when I confronted her with the discrepancy); my prep-school and college French, in which I had an overbrimming confidence, failed to stand me in very good stead; and M. Bolduc's passionate testimonials to the superior beauty of French girls appeared to me to have been, to say the least, overwrought. Thirty-four years later, everything was—or seemed—different. Paris looked impeccably clean (save for the Boulevard des Batignolles a couple of streets from the hotel, which was littered and stank of garbage); the hotel staff—and everyone else we encountered over the next four days—were friendly and accommodating; my French had developed legs since the 70's, to the gratifying extent that, at times, it ran away with me for minutes at a stretch; and the women were gorgeous, as M. Bolduc had promised so long ago they would be. Also, Parisians nowadays dress much more formally, and with far greater modesty, than do the Americans or the Italians. Apparently the *blanchisseries* of France, alone among the nations of the West, have mastered the art of laundering without drastic shrinkage, allowing a Frenchwoman's blouse to overtop her skirt or pants without an interval of three or four inches of bare belly occurring between them.

There are Americans willing to navigate the traffic of such European capitals as Paris and Rome. In fact, I'm acquainted with one—Catharine Taylor, another member of the old New York circle in the 70's. She and Ken picked us up at the hotel shortly before two o'clock that afternoon to take us to Mouchy-la-Ville, a little more than an hour's drive north from Paris, where the Pierces maintain a country house. Though Catharine made the ride across Paris Centre look easy, I refused to be fooled. However, the freeway through the northern *banlieues* seemed no more daunting than I-25 across Denver; later, traveling the two-lane roads through the lovely French countryside, I forgot we were in Europe at all: the low wooded hills, ragged treelines, and gently rolling fields could as well have been New York State or western New England. This was the region I had viewed from the air that morning as the plane, after making landfall over Normandy,

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lowered toward Charles de Gaulle Airport. From 20,000 feet, the country had appeared as green and innocent as Iowa—also, less populated. An illusion, I know: It is astonishing how, given (or, perhaps, on account of) the population density of Europe, the Europeans have managed their land so much better than we Americans have troubled ourselves to do. Six hours before, the valleys, dells, and river courses had been packed with pockets of gray mist that had since lifted and annealed themselves with the lowering sky, which itself began to dissipate as we approached Mouchy and the sun burned through, cutting ragged holes of pale blue overhead.

True friendship is a thing that can be set down and picked up at will, because it is never set aside. After a glass of wine and a look round the splendid 18th-century house and the cottage behind it, Stephen drove us to check in at the Relais du Jeu d'Arc in the neighboring town of Cires-lès-Mello, leaving our luggage to follow in the Taylors' car. The town is built of dark stone houses standing above narrow streets intersected by channeled watercourses in which minnows dart and hold their own against the current and overlooked by the Chateau de Mello, owned at present by the daughter of Douglas Dillon. The Relais, a former postal relay station established in the 17th century, is separated from the Place du Jeu d'Arc by a tall iron gate fronting the courtyard, now sodded in to form a greensward backed by an ivy-covered wall, where horses' harness and carriage wheels once jingled and rattled with the gaiety and excitement so exquisitely captured in the wonderful first act of Massenet's *Manon*.

There is no opportunity on a three-and-a-half day sprint to the Continent to catch one's breath, recover one's sleep, slip back into Europe as if it were a well-worn pigskin glove. The challenge has to be accepted as such, and with a rush of spirit and adrenaline, the way a man accepts a duel: head up, chin high, glass raised, ready for anything, and prepared to make the most of it. My wife and I had traveled over 5,000 miles to a birthday party. While both of us experienced moments in which we despaired at summoning the energy to exert ourselves (or even to keep awake) in satisfactory conversation during the cosy dinner at the Relais and the *grande affaire* itself the following afternoon, something like the mechanical momentum of the transatlantic flight sustained us through the *foie gras*, veal cutlet, salad with brie, and apple tart, and on into the boisterous after-party of Calvados, white wine, and Perrier that followed in a sitting room of the hotel. Similarly, Mass in a small church on the other side of town—which, at eight the next morning, felt like an absolute impossibility—turned out to be a dignified and quietly joyful service, attended by 30 or 40 *provenciales* ranging in age from the elderly to the infant and celebrated by a well-spoken priest who restricted his sermon to an economical *explication du texte*. Following Mass, we ate a badly needed *petit déjeuner* of bread, fruit, and coffee at the Relais, after which it was time to make the 15-minute drive back to Mouchy for the party.

Americans are well advised to be skeptical of what they read in their country's press, particularly as it relates to the French and the relationship that presently exists between them and the American people, four years after the furious international debate that ended (or became academic) after President Bush launched his attack on Iraq. Stephen Pierce's birthday party, hosting upward of 150 people, was very much a Franco-American affair, in which Gallic profiles and Anglo-American features dipped and bowed amid the thrusting, parrying tones of the *boulevardiers* and the softer accents of the genteel Yankee Northeast. This spirit of binational cordiality appeared to find its overriding visual expression in the big white tent—the color of peace and comity—erected on the lawn behind the house, where French girls as pretty as M. Bolduc ever promised circulated with trays bearing champagne glasses amid the tiered towers of the elaborate *hors d'oeuvres* rising at intervals across the greensward; while, at the concert that concluded the party, presented by L'Octuor de France (of which Stephen is a valued patron) at the Eglise de Heilles, a quarter-mile from the house, the poignant rapturous harmonies of Mozart, and of the more modern compositions that followed, seemed to embrace and to reconcile youth and age, the foreign and the familiar, present and past alike.

We caught a ride back to Paris and turned in at the hotel to enjoy what seemed to us our first full night's sleep in recent memory, while, around us, the city center subsided gradually for the night in its dreamy bath of warm display lighting.

Somehow, modern society makes do without what have always seemed to me essentials—namely, hats and walking sticks. The way to see Europe, as Hilaire Belloc understood, is by foot; and while I have never walked, as he did, the path from Paris to Rome, I've contributed my share of the labor of further polishing the timeworn cobblestones of several European capitals. For this, a walking stick is required, and, for a walking stick, I carry one of two lion-headed canes, hand-carved in Bali and Kenya, respectively. The Kenya stick is the heavier, tapering to a massive head of sculpted teak. With Zamba firmly in hand, and trailing Maureen behind me, I traversed several miles of Paris during our last, regretful hours in France. At 14:50 the following day, we embarked at De Gaulle on an American Airlines flight as far as Chicago.

Whether it was the hat, the walking stick, or the silver pocket watch and fob that betrayed us, we'll never learn. (The modern world is quick to recognize its enemies when it sees them, and not all its enemies are Muslims.) In the event, our tickets were electronically tagged. My wife and I were separated, interrogated, carefully searched at a distance from one another. A uniformed security officer snatched Zamba ignominiously from the conveyor belt and brandished him aloft.

"*Ce n'est pas une canne à épée!*" I shouted.

"*Mais c'est très dangereuse en tout cas! On peut frapper, frapper—!*"

The official seated in the glass booth ahead of security who'd just checked my passport was sympathetic—indeed, he appeared somewhat shocked by the commotion—but appeal was futile. In the end, though not compelled to register the stick with the police (as some anonymous voice in the fracas had been heard to suggest), I was compelled to return to check-in and there consign Zamba to the hold of the plane, wrapped protectively in layers of plastic bagging. Then, I was directed through security again and forced to submit to a final search of my person and carry-on luggage—all this, in the absence of my wife, who'd been unceremoniously boarded a quarter of an hour before—in the boarding tunnel.

Well, we'd had a good run since leaving Denver four days earlier and couldn't properly complain at this unfortunate conclusion to a glorious weekend. "The deed is done," Raspail had said—and not just in the case of *la belle France*, either, but of the West as a whole. Though the War on Terror is scarcely begun, already our civilization has been lost. ◇

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

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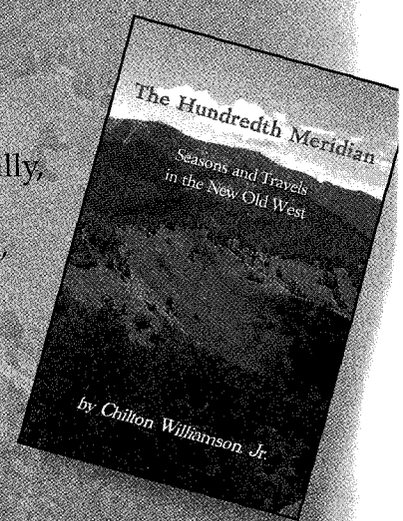

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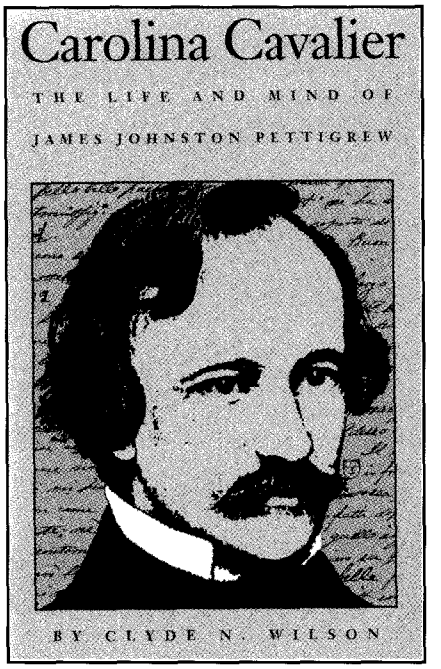

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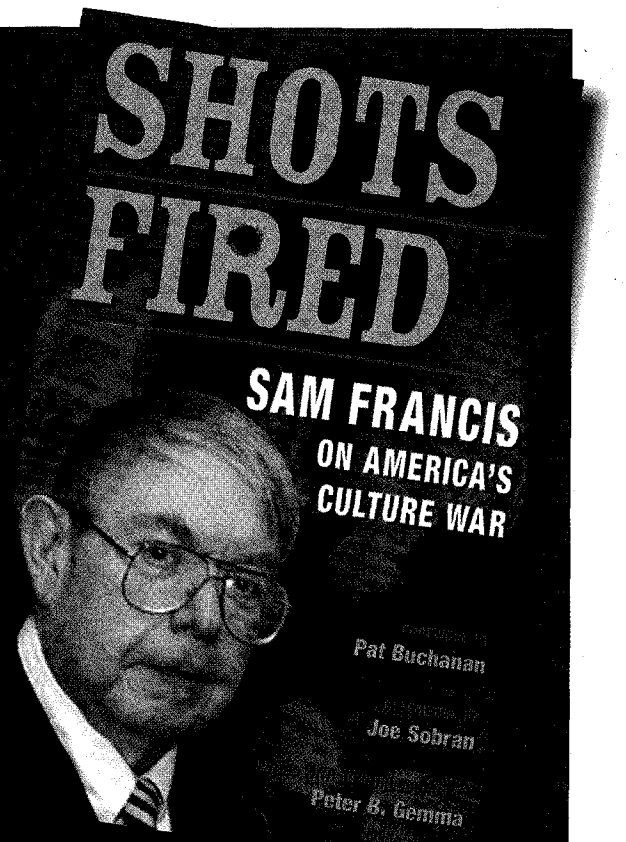

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